DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 471 813 FL 027 531

AUTHOR	Ushioda, Ema; Ridley, Jennifer
TITLE	Working with the European Language Portfolio in Irish Post-Primary Schools: Report on an Evaluation Project. CLCS Occasional Paper.
INSTITUTION	Trinity Coll., Dublin (Ireland). Centre for Language and Communication Studies.
REPORT NO	CLCS-OP-61
ISSN	ISSN-0332-3889
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	59p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Language Proficiency; *Language Teachers; *Portfolios (Background Materials); Program Evaluation; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	Europe; *Ireland

ABSTRACT

This report describes a qualitative research project designed to evaluate the use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in Irish post-primary schools. The project was coordinated by the Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College Dublin, and involved the participation of language teachers and learners from a number of schools in Ireland. The report is divided into four sections. Section 1 briefly sketches the origins and functions of the ELP, explains how the Irish ELP for post-primary learners was developed, and describes its key design features. Section 2 gives an account of the project that was set up to evaluate the use of the ELP in 2001-02. It outlines the aims and scope of the project, describes its working methods and data-gathering procedures, and gives an overview of the classrooms and participants involved. Section 3 presents a detailed evaluation of teachers' and learners' experiences of working with the ELP. The evaluation draws on teachers' own narrative accounts of classroom events and processes as well as learner reflections and learner-produced ELP materials. Section 4 concludes by considering particular issues and implications arising from the evaluation. (Contains 21 references.) (Author/SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 471 813

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Centre for Language and Communication Studies

Working with the European Language Portfolio in Irish post-primary schools: report on an evaluation project

Ema Ushioda and Jennifer Ridley

CLCS Occasional Paper No.61

ISSN 0332 3889

Autumn 2002

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. G. Little

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

FL027531

2 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CLCS Occasional Papers

General Editor: D. G. Little

CLCS Occasional Papers report on research carried out within or in association with the Centre for Language and Communication Studies, and on research carried out elsewhere which is of special interest to the Centre's own concerns and activities. In some instances they present the texts of public lectures promoted by the Centre.

The following titles have been published and are available from The Secretary, Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College, Dublin 2.

Autumn 1981

1. D. M. Singleton, *Language transfer: a review of some recent research* (31pp.)
2. Jeffrey L. Kallen, *Linguistics and oral tradition: the structural study of the riddle* (33pp.)
3. D. M. Singleton, *Age as a factor in second language acquisition* (70pp.) [OUT OF PRINT]

Summer 1982

4. Francis Nolan, *Voice quality and speech synthesis* (30pp.)
5. Roger Bennett, *Language elicitation procedures* (23pp.)

Winter 1982-3

6. S. M. Devitt, D. G. Little, S. P. Ó Conchúir & D. M. Singleton, *Learning Irish with* Anois is Arís (128pp.) [OUT OF PRINT]

Autumn 1983

7. William T. Littlewood, *A communicative approach to language-teaching methodology* (19pp.) [OUT OF PRINT]
8. Rose Maclaran, *On the interaction of semantics and pragmatics* (18pp.)
9. E. M. Harding, *Compensation strategies* (54pp.) [OUT OF PRINT]

Autumn 1984

10. Jeffrey L. Kallen, *Generative phonology in the clinic* (38pp.)
11. Gearóid O Ciaráin, *The affective dimension in second/foreign language learning: an interactional perspective* (42pp.) [OUT OF PRINT]

Spring 1985

12. D. M. Singleton & D. G. Little, *Foreign languages at second level: defining a syllabus, with particular reference to the needs of the senior cycle* (19pp.)
13. John Harris, *The polylectal grammar stops here* (12pp.) [OUT OF PRINT]

Spring 1986

14. D. G. Little & A. J. Grant, *Learning German without a teacher. Report on a self-instructional programme for undergraduate students of Engineering Science at Trinity College, Dublin, 1982-1984* (60pp.)
15. Máire Owens, *Eithne: a study of second language development* (62pp.)
16. D. Wilson & D. Sperber, *Pragmatics: an overview* (36pp.)

Autumn 1986

17. Ailbhe Ní Chasaide & Eugene Davis, *A data-processing system for quantitative analysis in speech production* (28pp.)
18. Seán M. Devitt, *Learning a foreign language through the media* (69pp.)
19. Meriel Bloor & Thomas Bloor, *Languages for specific purposes: practice and theory* (34pp.) [OUT OF PRINT]

Spring 1988

20. D. G. Little & D. M. Singleton, *Authentic materials and the role of fixed support in language teaching: towards a manual for language learners* (26pp.)

Spring 1989

21. Seán M. Devitt, *Classroom discourse: its nature and its potential for language learning* (72pp.)
22. V. J. Cook, *The relevance of grammar in the applied linguistics of language teaching* (43pp.)

Spring 1990

23. Sera De Vriendt & Pete Van de Craen, *Bilingualism in Belgium: a history and an appraisal* (52pp.)
24. David Singleton, *The cross-linguistic factor in second language learning: a report on some small-scale studies recently conducted at the CLCS* (20pp.)

Autumn 1990

25. Paul Farrell, *Vocabulary in ESP: a lexical analysis of the English of electronics and a study of semi-technical vocabulary* (82pp.) [OUT OF PRINT]
26. David Singleton, *The TCD Modern Languages Research Project: objectives, instruments and preliminary results* (19pp.)
27. Federica Scarpa, *Contrastive analysis and second language learners' errors: an analysis of C-test data elicited from beginners in Italian* (47pp.)

Spring 1991

28. Jennifer Ridley, *Strategic competence in second language performance: a study of four advanced learners* (95pp.) [OUT OF PRINT]

(continued on inside back cover)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CLCS Occasional Paper No.61
Autumn 2002

Working with the European Language Portfolio in Irish post-primary schools: report on an evaluation project

Ema Ushioda and Jennifer Ridley

0 Introduction

This report is concerned with a qualitative research project designed to evaluate the use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in Irish post-primary schools. The project was coordinated by the Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS), Trinity College Dublin, and involved the participation of language teachers and learners from a number of schools in Ireland.

The report is divided into four sections. Section 1 briefly sketches the origins and functions of the ELP, explains how the Irish ELP for post-primary learners was developed, and describes its key design features. Section 2 gives an account of the project that was set up to evaluate the use of the ELP in 2001–02. It outlines the aims and scope of the project, describes its working methods and data-gathering procedures, and gives an overview of the classrooms and participants involved. Section 3 presents a detailed evaluation of teachers' and learners' experiences of working with the ELP. The evaluation draws on teachers' own narrative accounts of classroom events and processes, as well as learner reflections and learner-produced ELP materials. Section 4 concludes by considering particulaf issues and implications arising from the evaluation.

1 Introducing the Irish ELP for post-primary schools

1.1 The European Language Portfolio: origins and functions

The ELP is the product of a Council of Europe initiative to promote language learning, plurilingualism and mobility among the citizens of its 43 member states. It comprises three components:

- a **Language Passport** that summarizes the owner's linguistic identity,

language learning experience, and language qualifications in an internationally transparent manner;

- a **Language Biography** that enables the owner to set learning targets, record learning and intercultural experience, and regularly assess his/her progress;
- a **Dossier** in which the owner keeps samples of his/her work in the language(s) he/she has learnt or is learning.

The ELP has been developed by the Council of Europe to fulfil two related functions:

- **Reporting function** – the ELP presents information about the owner's experience of learning and using second/foreign languages, and concrete evidence of his/her achievements. The reporting function is fulfilled by the Language Passport and the Dossier.
- **Pedagogical function** – the ELP makes the learning process more transparent to learners, promotes the development of their skills in planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning, and thus fosters the development of learner autonomy and responsibility. The pedagogical function is largely fulfilled by the Language Biography and the Dossier.

During 1998–2000, different versions of the ELP were piloted in 15 Council of Europe member states, including Ireland; between them they covered all educational domains, from primary to adult (for a detailed report, see Schärer 2001). The pilot projects involved approximately 30,000 learners and 2,000 teachers. By the summer of 2002, 30 ELP models had been accredited by the Council of Europe's Validation Committee, including the Irish model for post-primary schools under discussion here, as well as five Irish models for use with non-English-speaking newcomers which were also developed in CLCS (for further information, see Lazenby Simpson 2002).

All validated ELP models conform to *Principles and Guidelines* laid down by the Council of Europe (these, together with rules for accreditation and a detailed guide for developers, may be downloaded from the Council of Europe's ELP website: <http://culture.coe.int/portfolio>). Integral to the ELP concept is the self-assessment grid in the language passport, which expresses language proficiency in terms of the six common reference levels of the *Common European Framework* (Council of Europe 2001; see also Little and Perclová 2001):

- A1, A2 (basic user)
- B1, B2 (independent user)
- C1, C2 (proficient user)

classified according to five communicative skills:

- LISTENING
- READING
- SPOKEN INTERACTION
- SPOKEN PRODUCTION
- WRITING

The self-assessment grid comprises a concise set of descriptors for each skill at each of the six levels, in the form of positive "can do" statements. For example, the skill of LISTENING at level A2 is expressed thus:

> I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.

The owner uses the self-assessment grid to evaluate his/her proficiency, and records this self-assessment in a Profile of Language Skills page in the Language Passport. In this way, the ELP enables the owner to report his/her language skills in a manner that is internationally transparent, that supplements formal language qualifications, and that gives relevant bodies (educational institutions, prospective employers) a meaningful basis for interpreting such qualifications.

As indicated above, the ELP fulfils a documentary and reporting function but also a significant pedagogical function, since the process of compiling an ELP engages learners in thinking about their learning and regularly evaluating their skills. Furthermore, evidence from the pilot projects suggests that the ELP can serve as a useful planning and pedagogical tool for teachers and as a focus for teacher development. It was largely with these pedagogical concerns in mind that CLCS sought to develop a version of the ELP for the Irish post-primary sector.

1.2 The Irish ELP model for post-primary schools

1.2.1 How the Irish ELP model was developed

The design of the Irish ELP for post-primary schools was the product of a four-year research-and-development project (1998–2001) conducted by CLCS and known as the Learner Autonomy Project. (For a full account of the project and its findings, see Little, Ridley and Ushioda 2002). Working with a self-selected group of foreign language teachers in the Dublin area (mostly teachers of French or German), this project aimed to explore ways of fostering the development of learner autonomy in Irish foreign language classrooms. The project based its pedagogical approach on the principle of learner autonomy, which claims that we learn most

effectively when we are actively engaged in planning, monitoring and evaluating our own learning (for detailed discussion, see Little 1991). Applying this principle to classroom practice, the project focussed in particular on the following key issues:

- getting learners to accept responsibility for their learning;
- fostering the use of the target language in the classroom;
- helping teachers to develop their planning skills;
- looking for a new way of "teaching for the exams".

We identified these issues as especially important in Irish foreign language classrooms, which are generally teacher-led, textbook-driven and bound by a prescribed syllabus at lower and upper secondary level; and which, though ostensibly espousing a "communicative" pedagogy, seem to do little to engage learners in active use of the target language.

Partly as a way of addressing these issues, we sought to provide teachers and learners with a process tool that would help to promote greater learner involvement and responsibility, focus attention on the development of communication skills, facilitate teacher planning, and stimulate positive fruitful interaction between teaching-learning processes and syllabus and examination objectives. During the last 18 months of the Learner Autonomy Project, the research team designed and piloted a version of the European Language Portfolio to meet these needs.

1.2.2 Principal design features of the Irish ELP

The Irish ELP is designed to stimulate reflective learning and promote use of the target language in this process of reflection. Each of the three components of the ELP – the Language Passport, the Language Biography, and Dossier – is prefaced with a detailed "learning-to-learn" introduction that explains to learners how they can use the ELP to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning. These introductory elements are presented bilingually in English and Irish, the two official languages of Ireland (see, for example, Figure 1.1 below).

In addition, all of the pages in the Language Biography designed to stimulate reflection and awareness-raising are presented in all five curriculum languages: Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. This multilingual format aims to promote and support learners' efforts to use the target language as they engage in thinking and talking about learning.

The Irish ELP is designed to interact closely with the curriculum by providing a detailed *Checklist of Target Skills* derived from syllabus objectives (see section 1.2.3 below). A further feature is a 24-page handbook for teachers giving guidelines and practical suggestions for ways of working with the ELP in their classrooms.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Although the LANGUAGE BIOGRAPHY is a tool to help you think about your learning, it is also a tool to give you practice in using the language by putting your thoughts into words. At first you will probably find this difficult, and you may want to write in a mixture of your mother tongue and the language you are learning. But ask your teacher for the words and phrases you need, or find them in the checklist of target skills, and gradually you will build up the necessary vocabulary and knowledge to express yourself in the language. Using the language in this way will help you to develop your speaking and writing skills and achieve the syllabus targets. After all, being able to express yourself is one of the key goals in the Junior and Leaving Certificate syllabuses.

Uirlis is ea an TAIFEAD TEANGA a chabhróidh leat do mhachnamh a dhéanamh i dtaobh foghlaim teangacha, agus is uirlis de chineál eile é chomh maith, uirlis a chabhróidh leat cleachtadh a fháil ar an teanga a úsáid trí do chuid smaointe a chur i bhfriotal inti. Gach seans go mbeidh sé sin deacair ar dtús, agus seans go mbeidh tú ag iarraidh meascán teangacha a úsáid, is é sin do theanga dhúchais féin agus an teanga atá á foghlaim agat. Ach iarr ar do mhúinteoir na focail agus na frásaí a theastaíonn uait a insint duit, nó aimsigh féin iad sa seicliosta de scileanna is mian leat a bheith agat. De réir a chéile cuirfidh tú eolas ar an bhfoclóir agus ar an eolas a theastaíonn le go mbeidh tú in ann tú féin a chur in iúl sa teanga. Má úsáideann tú an teanga ar an gcaoi seo, cabhróidh sé leat do scileanna labhartha agus scríofa a fhorbairt agus spriocanna an tsiollabais a bhaint amach. Ceann de na spriocanna is tábhachtaí i siollabais an Teastais Shóisearaigh agus na hArdteistiméireachta is ea a bheith in ann tú féin a chur in iúl.

Figure 1.1
Extract from learning-to-learn introduction to the Language Biography

The **Language Passport** is a simplifed version for use through most of lower and upper secondary. The *Profile of Language Skills* page is designed to help learners understand the cumulative growth in complexity of their language skills and knowledge: the boxes that they gradually shade in to record their language development increase in size from proficiency level to proficiency level to signal this growth in complexity (see Figure 1.2 below). Towards the end of upper secondary, learners can transfer the information they have recorded to the Standard Adult Language Passport in preparation for entry into the world of work or further education and training.

The **Language Biography** is designed to engage and support learners' reflective involvement in the learning process. It emphasizes "learning how to learn" skills: planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning process. It comprises the following set of pages encouraging learners to think about and cumulatively record their reflections on various aspects of their language learning and language use:

- *My general aims and reflections*
- *My checklist of target skills (in five curriculum languages)*
- *Setting goals and thinking about learning*
- *Things I notice about language and culture*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

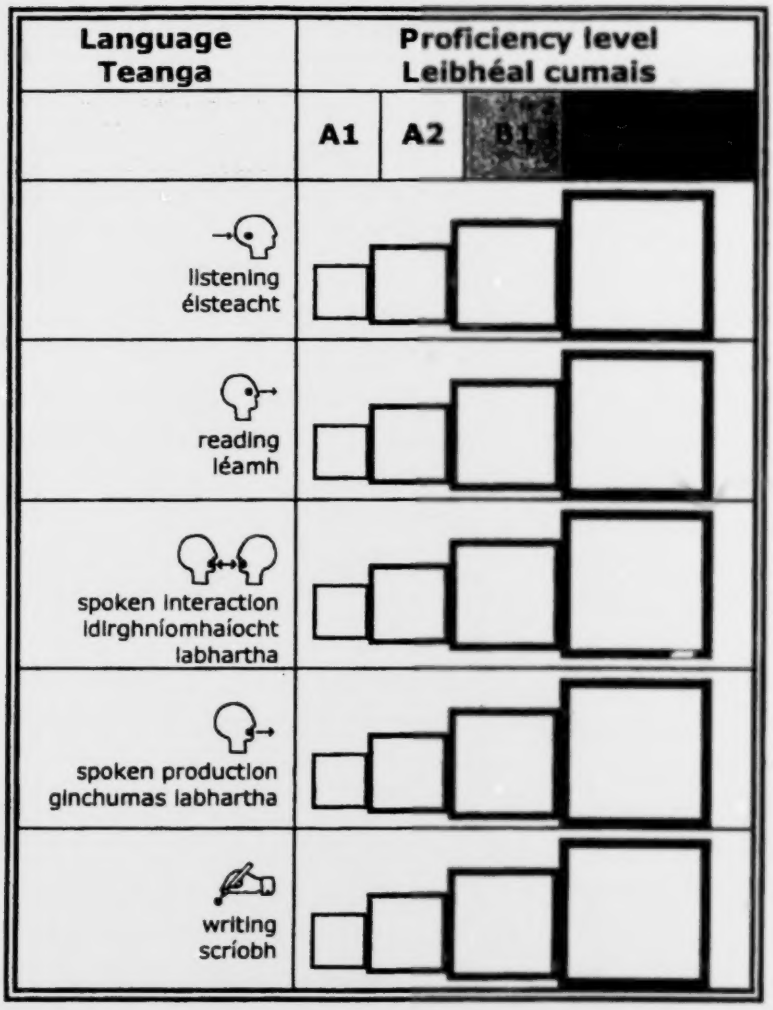

Figure 1.2
Self-assessment Profile of Language Skills

- *How I solve communication problems*
- *Methods I use to learn languages*
- *Intercultural experiences*
- *Heritage languages*

For example, Figure 1.3 (below) reproduces a section from the page on *My general aims and reflections.*

The **Dossier** is where learners collect evidence of their language learning and language use. It is the component of the ELP that most closely resembles the traditional concept of a "portfolio", in the sense of an artist's or a designer's portfolio of work. Its primary function is to display the

9 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

...../...../ 20.....	My next target / An chéad sprioc eile agam / Mon prochain objectif / Mein nächstes Lernziel / Mi siguiente meta / Il mio prossimo obiettivo ....
...../...../ 20.....	How well did I achieve it?/ Cé chomh mhaith is d'éirigh liom é a bhaint amach?/ Dans quelle mesure y suis-je parvenu(e)? / In wie weit habe ich es erreicht?/ ¿Qué nivel de dominio he conseguido?/ A che livello l'ho raggiunto? ....
...../...../ 20.....	What have I learnt about myself or about learning? / Cad a fuair mé amach fúm féin nó faoin bhfoghlaim? / Qu'ai-je appris sur moi-même ou sur l'apprentissage? / Was habe ich über mich oder das Lernen gelernt? / ¿Qué he aprendido sobre mí mismo o sobre el proceso de aprendizaje? / Che cosa ho imparato di me stesso o di come si apprende? ....

Figure 1.3
Extract from *My general aims and reflections* page

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

owner's language skills at their best in a varied range of contexts. Yet it also has a significant pedagogical function. As the "learning-to-learn" introduction to the Dossier explains, each learner must decide, in consultation with the teacher, what to put in the Dossier, how to structure its contents, how often to review the contents, and so on. Building one's Dossier thus means engaging in regular self-evaluation and reflection on personal progress. The introduction to the Dossier also encourages learners to use this part of the ELP to store personal glossaries of useful words and phrases, as well as notes on grammar, organized in ways that are most helpful for making word meanings, relationships and structures clear and easy to process and remember.

The Irish ELP also contains an **Appendix** which includes an English language version of *My Checklist of Target Skills* from the Language Biography. The intention is that teachers and learners should be encouraged to work with the appropriate target language version of the *Checklist*, but they can refer to the English translations for reference where necessary. The Appendix also provides photocopiable versions of each reflective page from the Language Biography, to cater for the needs of learners studying more than one language in the curriculum, and continually adding to and updating their ELP through their school years.

1.2.3 How the Irish ELP is related to the curriculum

The *Checklist of Target Skills* at the core of the Language Biography is derived from

- the illustrative scales in the *Common European Framework;*
- the communicative objectives of the official curriculum for lower and upper secondary in Ireland – i.e., the Junior and Leaving Certificate curricula.

As noted in 1.1 above, the *Common European Framework* classifies language proficiency according to six common reference levels, and provides a concise set of descriptors for global proficiency across these levels for each of five communicative skills (LISTENING, READING, SPOKEN INTERACTION, SPOKEN PRODUCTION, WRITING). In addition, the *Framework* offers a detailed expansion of these global descriptions of proficiency as a set of illustrative scales for various target skills. For example, under the global skill of LISTENING, separate illustrative scales of "can do" statements are provided for the target skills of listening to announcements and instructions, understanding interaction between native speakers, listening as a member of a live audience, listening to audio media and recordings.

In order to develop the *Checklist of Target Skills* for the Irish ELP, we examined the communicative objectives from the curriculum, and re-

phrased them using the wording of the illustrative scales in the *Common European Framework*. This meant that we were necessarily selective in working with the illustrative scales, since not all domains of language use covered in the scales are relevant to the curriculum objectives for learners at post-primary level.

The *Checklist of Target Skills* comprises five pages – one for each of the skills of LISTENING, READING, SPOKEN INTERACTION, SPOKEN PRODUCTION, and WRITING. Each page itemizes target "can do" objectives for the skill in question, sequenced in terms of the successive common reference levels of A1, A2, B1 and B2. The targets in levels A1 and A2 are appropriate to the Junior Certificate syllabus (lower secondary), and the targets in levels B1 and B2 are appropriate to the Leaving Certificate syllabus (upper secondary). This distribution of proficiency levels seems to be generally regarded as appropriate for lower and upper secondary learners in other European states as well. The highest levels of proficiency in the *Framework* (levels C1 and C2) are viewed as largely beyond the scope of post-primary language learners.

We decided to organize the *Checklist* with the five skills represented on separate pages in this way, because language development is rarely uniform across productive and receptive skills. A learner towards the end of upper secondary may, for example, be more or less at level B2 in the receptive skills of LISTENING and READING, but only reach B1 in the productive skills of SPEAKING and WRITING. This disparity between projected levels of attainment in reception and production is moreover reflected in the stated objectives of the official curriculum.

The *Checklist* enables learners to plan their next set of learning targets in relation to the syllabus and to evaluate their progress in mastering these targets. The *Checklist* encourages them to record how well they can perform each target task – i.e., whether they can perform this task *with a lot of help* (e.g., from their teacher), *with a little help*, or *on their own*. As illustrated in Figure 1.4 (below), for the skill of READING (level A2), learners can enter dates in the righthand columns to track their progress.

Teachers and learners can use the *Checklist* to plan the course of learning towards the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations and to analyse syllabus themes and topics in terms of underlying target skills. Here, for example, are just some of the target "can do" skills relevant to the activity or theme of "travelling" (P10) in the Junior Certificate syllabus:

- I can understand numbers and prices (LISTENING, level A1)
- I can understand times and dates (LISTENING, level A1)
- I can follow simple directions (e.g., how to get from X to Y) on foot or by public transport (LISTENING, level A2)

Level A2 (Junior Certificate)	my next goal	how well I can do this (enter dates) ☆	☆☆	☆☆☆
I can understand short simple messages and texts containing basic everyday vocabulary relating to areas of personal relevance or interest				
I can understand everyday signs and public notices (e.g., on the street, in shops, hotels, railway stations)				
I can find specific predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, timetables, menus, directories, brochures				
I can understand instructions and regulations when expressed in simple language (e.g., how to use a public telephone)				
I can understand short simple personal letters giving or requesting information about everyday life or offering an invitation				
I can identify key information in short newspaper/magazine reports recounting stories or events				
I can understand basic information in routine letters and messages (e.g., hotel reservations, personal telephone messages)				

Figure 1.4
Extract from *My Checklist of Target Skills*, READING, Level A2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- I can grasp the essential elements of clear simple messages and recorded announcements (LISTENING, level A2)
- I can understand everyday signs and notices (READING, level A2)

The *Checklist* thus helps to make syllabus objectives more readily transparent to learners by expressing them not as abstract units or items of knowledge to be covered, but as personal skills they develop as they expand their communicative repertoire.

1.2.4 The Irish ELP: intended pedagogical impact

As indicated in 1.2.1 above, the design of the Irish ELP was shaped by particular pedagogical concerns that arose from our Learner Autonomy Project. We intended that the ELP should help learners and teachers in a number of important ways:

- It should help learners to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning and thus become reflective learners.
- It should encourage use of the target language in the classroom, principally through its multilingual format designed to stimulate and support learners' efforts to work through the medium of the target language.
- It should foster the development of learners' awareness of the language or languages they are learning, as well as their awareness of the language learning process, by encouraging them to engage in reflection and to record their reflections on a regular basis.
- It should foster the development of learners' intercultural awareness, both by encouraging them to document personal intercultural experiences, and by stimulating reflection on aspects of the target language culture as they work with different texts and media.
- It should help teachers to plan the course of teaching-learning in relation to the curriculum, and to monitor the progress of individual learners.

The teachers' handbook that accompanies the ELP elaborates more fully how the ELP might be exploited to maximize these intended benefits. It also illustrates a range of approaches to working with the ELP in relation to different pedagogical focuses, such as preparing for examinations, developing reading and writing skills, or diversifying homework tasks. At the same time, the handbook contains the clear message that the ELP is designed to be a flexible process tool and that there is no single "best method". As the handbook emphasizes, how the ELP is used will depend on individual learners' developing language skills, goals and preferences, as these emerge in interaction with the teacher's own pedagogical approach within the constraints of the curriculum and the specific teaching-

learning environment.

Ultimately, the success or effectiveness of the ELP as a pedagogical tool must be gauged with reference to the particular teaching-learning context in which it is implemented, and validated in relation to the evolving experiences of those engaged in working with it. Large-scale survey data may provide useful descriptive statistics that help us to evaluate how far the use of the ELP has penetrated a particular educational sector. However, such statistics can tell us little about the effectiveness of the ELP as a pedagogical tool in the hands of individual teachers and learners. It is our view that if the ELP is to gain widespread acceptance, qualitative empirical research is needed that examines processes of pedagogical implementation in particular teaching-learning contexts, so that examples of successful practice, as well as problems and issues arising from implementation, might be evaluated and appropriately disseminated (for further discussion see Little 2002). Such was the view that shaped our decision to conduct a focussed empirical evaluation of the Irish ELP. Section 2 introduces the evaluation project.

2 The ELP Network Project 2001–02

2.1 How the project was launched

The evaluation project was launched in October 2001, following the publication of the Irish ELP by Authentik Language Learning Resources Ltd. (Authentik 2001). A special teachers' conference was held in Trinity College on 19–20 October to introduce the Irish ELP, and was attended by approximately 130 language educators. At the conference, practising teachers interested in working with the ELP were invited to join the ELP Network Project. The network project had two related aims:

- to act as a support network for teachers experimenting with the ELP in their classrooms, enabling them to share experiences and ideas with one another;
- to evaluate the use of the ELP in different language classrooms, with a view to reporting findings to the Council of Europe's ELP project.

Participants were invited to join the project either as network members with no specific commitment to the classroom-based evaluation process, or as network members who were actively involved in using the ELP in a particular language classroom and were willing to provide us with focussed evaluative feedback on a monthly basis. Classrooms taking part in the empirical evaluation received complimentary ELPs and were also invited to enter an ELP competition (see section 2.3.2 below).

Twenty-three participants signed up to join the ELP Network Project. Twenty were language teachers and the remaining members were representatives of the Department of Education and Science, the Post-Primary Languages Initiative, and Authentik Language Learning Resources Ltd. Fifteen of the twenty participating teachers opted to engage in the classroom evaluation of the ELP. All five curriculum languages (Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian) were represented among the target languages taught by those taking part in the evaluation. In addition, the project membership included a teacher of Japanese teaching a transition (fourth) year group at beginners' level.

Five of the teachers taking part in the evaluation project had already worked with us in the Learner Autonomy Project (see Little, Ridley and Ushioda 2002) and had experimented with an earlier prototype version of the ELP in 2000–01. Two of these teachers provided input at the October conference, sharing their own insights from their experience of working with the ELP.

Appendix 1 provides a full list of the teachers, schools and classrooms that took part in the evaluation.

2.2 Purpose and scope of the project

As indicated in 1.2.4 above, our purpose was to conduct a qualitative empirical evaluation of the ELP that focussed on process and experience from the perspective of those directly engaged in using it in a particular teaching-learning environment. We were interested to know what happened in classrooms where the ELP was introduced, how it was received by learners, how it was mediated to them by teachers, what kinds of practical constraints and issues arose in its implementation, and above all, what kinds of sustained impact the use of the ELP was perceived to have (a) on teachers and (b) on learners.

In order to give focus to the evaluation and to provide a comparative basis for sharing and analysing experiences from different classrooms, it was necessary to establish a structured framework for both classroom experimentation and teachers' narrative reports of their experiences. To this end, we asked teachers taking part in the empirical evaluation to select one or more of the pedagogical focuses illustrated in the teachers' handbook:

a understanding the curriculum and working towards the examinations;
b negotiating homework tasks;
c the development of reading and writing skills;
d the development of speaking skills;

e project work.

As we explained to teachers, it was entirely up to them how they might integrate one or more of these focuses into their existing pedagogical agenda, and how they might exploit the ELP to suit their particular purposes. Nevertheless, in order to provide a uniform structure to the evaluation process, we equipped teachers with a monthly report form that asked them to reflect on the process of implementation and their classroom experiences under the following headings:

- Which pedagogical focus(es) have you chosen (a - e) and why?
- Please give a detailed account of what you did with your class this month in relation to the ELP
- Please describe how you think this helped your learners to
  - plan and organize their learning
  - set learning goals
  - monitor and evaluate their learning
  - think about the target language
  - think about problems in learning
- How well did things work for you this month? Please give examples
- What problems, if any, did you experience?
- What problems, if any, did your learners experience?
- Additional comments or reflections

2.3 Structure of the project and its working methods

2.3.1 Project meetings, classroom experimentation and evaluation

The ELP Network Project was organized as a series of Tuesday evening meetings held during the school terms in Trinity College. In all, seven meetings took place at monthly intervals from November 2001 to May 2002.

The first meeting, on 6 November 2001, was devoted to discussing organizational issues and outlining the project's working methods, agenda of meetings and expected outcomes. At this stage, those interested in committing themselves to the empirical evaluation of the ELP were asked to consider (a) which class(es) they might select for inclusion in the project, and (b) which pedagogical focus(es) they wished to give particular attention to. It was agreed that the classroom experimentation and evaluation phase would begin in January 2002 and conclude in May, culminating in an ELP competition and award ceremony for participating learners.

The second meeting, on 4 December 2001, was used to explore the key theoretical concept of learner autonomy that underpins the design and

Learner autonomy: a working definition

- Learners take their first steps towards autonomy when they begin to accept responsibility for their own learning.
- They exercise and develop their autonomy by sharing in the decisions and initiatives that give shape and direction to the language learning process.
- By planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning, they develop their metacognitive and metalinguistic capacities (their ability to reflect on the learning process, the forms of the target language, and the uses to which the target language can be put).

Pedagogical implications

- Learners must be aware of the requirements of the curriculum (what they are expected (i) to know about the target language and (ii) to be able to do using the target language).
- The curriculum should be the basis on which interim learning targets are negotiated
- As their autonomy develops, learners should gradually be given greater freedom of choice as regards learning content and learning activities.
- Freedom of choice entails an obligation to be answerable for the consequences (responsible for one's own learning); learners must engage in regular evaluation of their progress, both as a class/group and as individuals.
- Learners will find it easier to plan and monitor their learning if they keep a formal written record of what they do, how they do it, and with what results.
- Learners must use the target language as much as possible, not only to perform communicative/learning tasks but to reflect on and evaluate their learning.
- Learners must pay explicit attention to the formal features of the target language - grammar, vocabulary but also pronunciation and intonation.
- An explicit focus on form may sometimes mean drill and practice, but this should always be related to some context of target language use.
- It is all but impossible to focus on grammar except by using written forms of the target language; thus reading and writing should play a central role from the beginning.
- Writing should also be used from the beginning to support the development of speaking skills.

Figure 2.1
The "working document" from the Learner Autonomy Project

pedagogical function of the ELP. Participants were shown a video of "autonomy in practice" – an English language class in a Danish middle school taught by Hanne Thomsen (Thomsen and Gabrielsen 1991) – and subsequently discussed such issues as the role of group work, the facilitative role of the teacher, use of the target language as the medium of learning, the use of writing as a support for speaking, the engagement of learners in collective and individual reflection (for detailed exploration of these and related points, see for example Dam 1995, Little 1999).

This discussion was followed by an overview of the Learner Autonomy Project (1998–2001), its principal areas of pedagogical experimentation, and a summary of its main empirical findings (for a full account of the project, see Little, Ridley and Ushioda 2002). The overview included a brief exploration of the Learner Autonomy Project's "working document" (see Figure 2.1 above) comprising a brief definition of learner autonomy and a statement of its pedagogical implications. These pedagogical implications had formed the basis of participating teachers' classroom experimentation in the Learner Autonomy Project.

The classroom experimentation and evaluation phase of the ELP Network Project began in January 2002. During this phase, teachers submitted monthly narrative reports on their classroom experiences of working with the ELP (for report structure, see 2.2 above). The project meetings were devoted to sharing and discussing classroom experiences, ideas and innovations. Meetings generally took the form of small-group discussion followed by plenary feedback summarized on posters. Teachers were also encouraged to bring in samples of learner-produced ELP materials, such as target language texts and project work from the Dossier.

The final project meeting, on 21 May 2002, was devoted to a general retrospective analysis of the year's experience as a whole. This analysis was elicited individually in writing (final report form), and collectively through group discussion recorded on audiotape. The focus points for reflection in the final report form and group discussion were as follows:

- What difference has working with the ELP made to you as a teacher in relation to
  - planning (courses, lessons), time management?
  - classroom management (organizing activities, groups, etc.)?
  - use of the textbook and other teaching-learning materials?
  - your personal view of the learning process?
  - your view of how your learners are getting on in developing their target language proficiency?
- What difference has working with the ELP made to your learners in

relation to

- interest, motivation, attitudes to learning?
- development of skills in self-management (planning, monitoring, evaluating learning)?
- development of target language proficiency (overall proficiency levels, focus on particular skills)?

Following each project meeting, a summary of discussion and feedback was circulated by e-mail to all members of the network, including any who had been unable to attend. It should be noted that a number of network members who were not Dublin-based had to travel some distance to attend the monthly meetings, and showed a level of commitment to the project that was quite remarkable. It is evident that the opportunity to participate regularly in a shared forum for discussion and information exchange with other ELP practitioners was a key factor in sustaining teacher interest and motivation.

For a variety of practical reasons, of course, not all 15 teachers who initially committed themselves to classroom experimentation and evaluation were able to carry through their commitment. Some, for example, joined the project late and found it too difficult to introduce the ELP to their learners more than half way through the school year. In the end 10 teachers engaged in some form of experimentation and provided us with feedback. Of these, 7 teachers were particularly active, and involved their learners in the ELP competition.

2.3.2 The ELP competition for learners

An ELP competition was organized to give the classroom experimentation and empirical evaluation phase a degree of structure and purpose for the participating learners; and also to give them the sense that they were involved in a project that extended beyond the confines of their own classroom. The competition culminated in an award ceremony held at Trinity College on Friday 10 May 2002, where the awards were presented by Dr Pavel Cink, Director of the Department of International Relations, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Republic, and chair of the Council of Europe's ELP Validation Committee.

The form of the competition and the prize categories were briefly discussed with teachers at the first project meeting, in November 2001, and subsequently elaborated and agreed upon. Three prize categories were chosen:

- best ELP
- most original idea
- general achievement

It was decided that each participating class should nominate their own prizewinners in each category, and that these prizewinning ELPs should then be submitted to the CLCS research team for the selection of overall prizewinners. It was also decided that learners themselves should be centrally involved in discussing the evaluation criteria for these categories, and in selecting the prizewinners in their class. A full list of prizewinners is given in Appendix 2.

2.4 Forms of data gathered

The principal sources of data used in the evaluation were:

- monthly teacher reports on classroom experience;
- discussion and feedback during the monthly meetings (summarized in written form by a member of the research team);
- each teacher's individual retrospective analysis of the year's experiences (recorded on the final report form);
- collective retrospective analysis from the final project meeting (group discussion recorded on audiotape);
- samples of learner-produced ELP documents, texts and other materials;
- samples of learner reflections from pages in the Language Biography;
- written learner reflections from one ELP project class, elicited by means of an open-ended questionnaire;
- fieldnotes from the classroom visit.

The last two sources of data refer to a visit made by a member of the research team to one ELP project class in April 2002. This was a first-year French class whose teacher had been involved in our Learner Autonomy Project since 1998. We were therefore well acquainted with aspects of her pedagogical practice and professional development, and had already made a number of visits to the school to gather data from other learners and observe her lessons. For our purposes in this project, we devised a simple questionnaire with five open-ended questions, following a format we had used previously in the Learner Autonomy Project (see Little, Ridley and Ushioda 2002, Chapter 2). This entailed talking through the first question to make sure that everyone understood what was being asked, giving them time to write down their individual responses on a prepared answer-sheet, then talking through the second question, and so on.

The five questions were:

1. Do you like working with the ELP in your French class? If yes, tell us why. If no, tell us why not.
2. In this next question, I want you to tell us why you think using the

ELP might actually help you to learn French. For example, using a diary helps you to plan and remember important events. Using a computer helps you to produce nice-looking documents or get information from the Internet. Using a mobile phone helps you to stay in touch with people. In what ways do you think using the ELP helps you to learn French?

3. As you know, the ELP has three different sections: the *Language Passport*, the *Language Biography*, and the *Dossier* (where you store your own personal work). And there are different kinds of pages in these sections – pages where you set goals, pages where you write down things you have noticed about the French language or French culture, and so on. Tell us which particular bit of the ELP you like best, and why. And which bit do you like least of all, and why?
4. The ELP talks about five communicative skills: *listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production* and *writing*. Which of these skills in particular have you been working on in your French class with Miss X? You can tick more than one skill.
5. We know that Miss X gets you to look at the different topics and skills in the Junior Cert. syllabus, and to decide as a class on your next learning target as you work with the ELP. Do you do this kind of thing – setting your own targets – in your other school subjects? And why do you think it's a good idea to try to set your own learning targets like this?

After learners had completed the questionnaire (which took about 25 minutes), the researcher spent the remaining 15 minutes engaging the class in a general discussion about their experience of working with the ELP and learning French ("fieldnotes" in the list above).

3 Classroom experimentation

We now consider how the teachers worked with the ELP during the evaluation period, from January to May 2002. As already noted, 10 teachers were involved in some form of experimentation, 7 of them more actively in that they entered their classes for the ELP competition. The data we collected provide insights into some of the problems and successes that both groups encountered. We start with the teachers' initial reactions to the ELP as a pedagogical tool and the approaches they chose to take, then look more closely at the way in which four teachers used the ELP to confront particular problems. After that we summarize the learners' experience of working with the ELP, and then return to the teachers' final thoughts on the project. Three key issues that we explore in this section

Teacher	Learner group	Pedagogical focus
L	1st year French	speaking skills
S	1st year French	speaking skills, project work
O	1st year French	writing skills
B	2nd year Irish	syllabus
	2nd year Italian	speaking/reading/writing
D	2nd year French	speaking/reading/writing
M	2nd year French	curriculum
N	2nd year French	reading/writing
A	3rd year French (Junior Certificate)	curriculum/exams
J	4th year *ab initio* Japanese (transition year)	reading/writing/speaking
F	6th year French (Leaving Certificate)	curriculum/exams and self-assessment
	4th and 5th year Spanish	curriculum/exams

Table 3.1
Teachers' pedagogical focus

are whether and in which respects (i) the teachers used the ELP as a pedagogical tool, (ii) their learners' use of the ELP helped them to understand more about learning processes, and (iii) the learners too understood, and benefited from, the ELP as a learning tool.

3.1 Teachers' initial decisions about working with the ELP

On joining the ELP project, teachers were asked to identify their main pedagogical focus. They chose one or more from the following: understanding the curriculum and working towards examinations; negotiating homework tasks; the development of reading and writing skills; the development of speaking skills; project work (see 2.2 above). Table 3.1 (above) shows their initial choice.

It was perhaps to be expected that the two teachers whose classes were shortly due to take state exams (A and F) chose the ELP as a springboard for preparing for the exams. As far as the others were concerned, their initial choice of focus was based on the particular needs of the class, as they perceived them. However, because they knew learners' needs to be dynamic, some changed their focus of attention in diagnostic fashion. Teacher O, for example, having decided to concentrate on writing skills, soon concluded that the most appropriate way of realizing this was to get small groups of learners working together on projects. The teacher of Japanese (teacher J) had no textbook and quickly saw that the ELP provided a basis on which to build a curriculum that could be translated in terms of the various skills she also wanted to focus on. Significantly, teacher L, whose first concern was the development of speaking skills, later changed her focus to reading and writing skills. Like those teachers who had taken part in the Learner Autonomy Project, teacher L came to realize that in the early stages of foreign language learning, learners' ability to read and write in the target language can support the development of their speaking skills.

3.2 Teachers' early experiences of using the ELP

At the first two project meetings, the teachers were asked to summarize their initial concerns and to indicate the positive and negative aspects of their experience so far.

The first issue that arose at the opening meeting was the physical appearance of the ELP. Some teachers had negative comments, noting that it was "heavy", "adult" and "official looking". Others suggested that they should remove pages not immediately relevant to their learners to make the contents of the folder more compact and user-friendly. It was also felt

important that teachers should make it clear to the learners that they *owned* their folders, whether they were kept in a safe place in the classroom or taken home.

A second issue that concerned some teachers was how to explain the pedagogical function of the ELP to learners. Two teachers who had already experimented with a pilot version of the ELP emphasized the importance of explaining its usefulness right at the beginning, pointing out to learners, for example, that it could be used to collect self-produced target language materials and to monitor progress. Teacher S explained what she did with her junior cycle (lower secondary) class thus:

> We looked at the areas of study within the Junior Certificate French syllabus to see what topics interested the pupils. At the start of the year I had asked the students why they wanted to learn French and what benefit French could be to them. We integrated these two factors and came up with a list of possible topics to study. (First report form)

Teacher A took a more direct approach, choosing first to explain the self-regulatory function of the ELP by discussing the Language Biography:

> I brought the ELP into the class and tried to formally introduce the idea of learners monitoring their progress regularly. (First report form)

The third issue that came up in discussion was the precise relationship between the ELP and the use of the textbook. It became evident that all the teachers quickly got their learners to start preparing activities that would lead to the production of work for possible inclusion in the Dossier. To this extent they welcomed a new route for teaching that was independent of the learning activities suggested by their textbooks. In one class, for example, learners' first activity working with the ELP was to go through the curriculum, select a particular topic, and devise tasks that would further their knowledge in the area (building vocabulary lists was a favourite activity). Teacher L gives an example of learners taking the initiative:

> Pupils thought it best to revise "Times/Days" as a unit, before going on to something new. (Second report form)

It thus became evident that the ELP was a means of facilitating lesson planning. It was also clear, however, that teachers did not always have a *specific* master plan for their lessons during this period. Rather, learning activities such as homework tasks arose spontaneously or evolved naturally, especially where project work was involved. Generally, activities were decided upon either by the teacher in consultation with the class or by the learners themselves, often as they selected learning targets.

For some teachers, especially those who had not actively promoted

learner autonomy before, the introduction of the ELP seemed to herald a new type of relationship between themselves and the class – a relationship that a few found unnerving. The involvement of learners in decisions concerning learning activities, while promoting a "relaxed and cooperative atmosphere" (teacher B, first report form), led a few teachers to feel less in control of time management than before. They encouraged their learners to set personal learning targets, but as soon as the learners took this responsibility seriously, the teachers felt less sure about how to oversee learning activities and allocate time in accordance with learners' needs. Teacher B described her new circumstances thus:

> Learning progressed at a slower pace than last term/year, but this may be good, as they will hopefully retain more. I realized that I used to expect them to consolidate new topics too quickly. They need plenty of repetition of even very basic material. (First report form)

Concern about time management gave rise to another related question: how often should learners be working with the Language Biography (setting learning targets, for example), or working on activities that furthered their knowledge or skills in a particular domain, or preparing work for the Dossier? One teacher who had taken part in the pilot ELP project offered a solution: each Monday her class decided what they would like to do or what they would expect to complete by the end of the week, and on Friday they checked collectively to see whether their targets had been reached. This suggestion illustrates the tendency, noted above, to plan in the short rather than the long term, and to tick off items on the curriculum one by one as teacher and learners felt they had been "covered". It also reminds us of the value of group decision-making.

As Figure 3.1 (below) shows, teachers quickly adopted the practice of asking their learners to judge not only whether they had "covered" a particular topic or practised a particular skill but also the extent to which they thought they had mastered it. Indeed, this checklist was first devised by a teacher taking part in the Learner Autonomy Project, and proved to be a crucially useful aid in helping the ELP teachers and individual learners to evaluate their progress during the year. (Most learners preferred to draw a smiling face to denote "good", a neutral face to denote "average", and a sad face to denote "poor".)

Four additional topics associated with these initial concerns were often discussed in greater detail during the evaluation period. Like the decisions teachers had taken about the allocation of time, these topics were implicitly linked to each teacher's willingness to hand over to the learners greater responsibility for their own learning; in other words, they were linked to

European Language Portfolio / Syllabus Junior Certificate

Topic		I can understand the vocabulary	I can write a paragraph / letter on the topic	I can understand the tape	I can have a conversation about the topic	I have produced a document for the ELP
1	Meeting and greeting people	☺	☺	😐	😐	☹
2	Hobbies / sport / music / TV	☺	☺		😐	
3	Careers					
4	Family and house	☺	☺	😐	😐	☺
5	Town and buildings					
6	Pets / animals and what they eat	☺	☺	😐		😐
7	Weather conditions					
8	School / favourite subjects / timetable	☺			😐	

Figure 3.1
Section from the Junior Certificate checklist used by ELP classes ("blue sheet")

the ways in which teachers should guide learners towards greater autonomy. For some teachers, this process involved a shift of attitude, or possibly a new state of mind, with regard to the delicate relationship between teacher and learners (Little 2001).

The first of these four topics was how the ELP related to other learning materials. Nearly all of the teachers gradually came round to the view that the textbook was *not* going to drive their class plans. In other words, they were not proceeding through the textbook page by page, unit by unit; rather, they were using the textbook (or, in the case of one teacher, eight textbooks) as a flexible resource.

An example of this is provided by teacher B's Irish class, who responded well to her suggestion that they themselves should devise learning activities. One learner developed ideas for activities to do with learning Irish verbs. He started by writing an outline of the three categories

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

of Irish verbs, then composed a poem that in his view "contains all the verbs needed" as a means of helping his fellow students to remember the irregular verbs. His further suggestions are summarized in Figure 3.2 (below).

In most cases the ELP fitted easily into the life of the project classrooms as one more learning resource; for a few teachers, however, precisely how to combine working with a textbook and working with the ELP remained problematic.

The second topic that was frequently discussed was learners' self-assessment. This was seen as a key issue, since on this ability hinged the learners' developing ability to manage their own learning. On the report form there were sections on how teachers thought the ELP was helping learners to plan and organize their learning, to set learning goals, and to

1. Competitions could be held in class with prizes for the best or most amusing poems.

2. Students could learn off their friends' poems as well.

3. Winners' poems could be put on classroom posters.

4. A small book of poems could be printed on a computer or the "poets" could put their work on tape.

5. The secret of this method is to learn the poems / poems in all tenses. Past, Present, Future, Conditional and Past Habitual, also in Question and Answer including negative answer. A competition could be held to see who can say all or any tense without a mistake.

Figure 3.2
Suggestions for verb-related activities from a learner of Irish

monitor and evaluate their learning. Interestingly, the only class that seemed to be actively resistant to the teacher's encouragement of greater learner autonomy was the most advanced group in terms of age and proficiency level, that of teacher F (see Table 3.1 above). Teacher F complained at this early stage that "they still see the teacher as an answer book". In the beginning, this learner group apparently found self-assessment difficult – teacher F thought they were "afraid" of setting learning goals.

In practice it turned out that learners accepted and even enjoyed being guided towards the new habit of self-assessment (cf. section 3.4 below). The teachers helped them by focussing their attention first on learning targets, usually in relation to the curriculum. We noted earlier that the teachers took the topics of the curriculum as an initial framework (Figure 3.1), and this caused learners to reflect on what they had done, what vocabulary they knew, and also the extent to which they felt confident they knew or understood a topic, or had mastered certain skills. A few examples illustrate how each teacher took his or her individual approach to getting learners started on organizing, monitoring and evaluating their learning. One teacher focussed her learners' attention on the target language:

> The ELP helped to focus pupils' attention on single aspects of the language, e.g. "I want to understand the passé composé". Children who chose this studied the relevant chapter in their books, tested themselves and were happy they knew it. (First report form)

Another teacher took a more robust approach:

> Regular tests – when a certain mark (65%) is not reached, the test must be re-sat. The students must comment on and explain their marks. (First report form)

Teacher M was more cautious in her approach; she used documents that learners had prepared for the Dossier to trigger self-assessment:

> They find it difficult to understand what I mean by a sample of good work. This is an area I need to give them more guidance on. However as the various class members have come up with a variety of "good" work, the peer examples will expand on this. (First report form)

This teacher also noted an interesting feature of learners' assessment of classroom activities. She realized that her learners often had very different perceptions of lessons, and that their reactions were possibly related to their motivation. Some wrote in their ELP that an activity was "good because it was easy", while others found that it was "good because it was difficult". This comment from teacher A (under the heading "problems

experienced") also suggests that learners' capacity for self-assessment develops gradually with practice:

> A problem: expressing their goals in manageable pieces; being unable to grasp if they'd made progress without my intervention (First report form)

A comment made by teacher L in the third month of the project confirms that reflective skills develop gradually, and that understanding is likely to precede enjoyment:

> The pupils are beginning to see the pattern of setting goals – what they hope to achieve and how to go about it. (Third report form)

Goal setting, as part of learner reflection, brings us to the third topic that frequently cropped up, learner motivation. As the following extracts show, teachers observed various levels of enthusiasm among their learners during the first few weeks of using the ELP. (It should be noted that motivation was not included as an item to be commented on in the report forms; rather, it emerged as a constant theme of teachers' introspection, either under the heading "additional comments or reflections" or at the discussion meetings.)

Teacher F, whose sixth-year group seemed initially the most hostile to the ELP, nevertheless noted that her learners "can see it will help them with revision" (for the forthcoming state exam). The younger learners were generally more enthusiastic, and it seemed to be the case that target setting by the learners reinforced their motivation. For example, Teacher S wrote:

> Because the goals were individual and specific to the students and not set by the teacher or the textbook, they felt more at ease with the subject and were anxious to achieve the goals they had set. (First report form)

Teacher B commented on the positive effect of the collaborative atmosphere of her group (learners of Irish):

> The class seemed very receptive to the new approach. They genuinely want to make progress and gain good marks, are open-minded and a bit enthusiastic about autonomous learning. All their suggestions have been tried and I was pleasantly surprised at their willingness to listen to all opinions. (First report form)

This reference to "the new approach" confirms that teachers in the ELP project who were new to the theory and practice of learner autonomy were, without exception, immediately willing to turn their more traditional, teacher-led pedagogical approach into one which gave greater prominence to their learners' views and opinions, including their self-assessment and target setting. It is interesting to note that teacher B was rather surprised to find that her learners seemed to become more

motivated because they were involved in target setting. Like teachers at the beginning of the Learner Autonomy Project, she did not expect that allowing learners a greater say in their learning would lead to enhanced motivation. Rather, teachers found it difficult to escape from the belief that it was up to them to stimulate their learners' interest in the subject via a never-ending supply of "fun" materials. It thus came as an additional surprise that learners' intrinsic motivation seemed to grow when they were asked to take decisions about their learning (cf. Ushioda 2001). Teacher S, also new to the practicalities of developing learner autonomy, immediately found links between the ELP and her learners' motivation:

> The students were surprised at first with the autonomous approach to learning. Because the goals were individual and specific to the students and not set by the teacher or the textbook, they felt more at ease with the subject and were anxious to achieve the goals they had set. (First report form).

We return to the topic of motivation later (see 3.5 below) when we summarize the teachers' final view of the evaluation process. It will emerge that on the whole learners were highly motivated to work with the ELP, though we should perhaps not underestimate the motivating effect that participation in the ELP competition may also have had (see 2.3.2 above).

Finally, the fourth topic that was raised frequently at the monthly project meetings, usually by the research team, was the extent to which the teachers thought the ELP helped learners to reflect in a meaningful way on the target language and on particular problems in learning it. Perhaps not surprisingly, in these areas the teachers' individual teaching approaches seemed to be reflected in what occupied their learners' attention. We should also be aware of action-researcher bias, in the sense that teachers picked up what they wanted to find. The following example possibly illustrates this relationship between what the teacher wanted and what she thought her learners focussed on (we should note too that this teacher always wrote in terms of "we", meaning "the learners and I"):

> The majority of the work in our classroom takes place through the target language, so the pupils are automatically encouraged to think about the target language. The students were anxious to communicate in the target language and because the directions in the ELP are in the target language, it helped them to focus on the language. (First report form).

Another teacher, however, tended to focus on the acquisition of linguistic forms:

> Learners are encouraged to find mnemonics/triggers for remembering new words – every new structure and grammar element of the target language is discussed in re-

lation to English and Irish. (First report form)

As regards special learning problems that the ELP may have helped learners to overcome, here again teachers expressed a variety of opinions. However, it was noticeable that most teachers found this a difficult issue to deal with, as did the learners themselves, especially in the first couple of months:

> Only one student wrote in her portfolio how to solve problems this time. It would be better to provide some time during class for discussion next time. (Teacher J, first report form)

3.3 Individual teachers managing their particular pedagogical focus

We now describe how four teachers used the ELP. As noted earlier, the needs of their learner group tended to drive the approach that teachers took when introducing the ELP, and each of these four focussed their attention on a different aspect of the ELP.

3.3.1 Teacher L: initial focus on speaking, then on writing

As Table 3.1 showed, teacher L's prime goal was to see the extent to which the ELP helped her class (first-year learners of French) to develop their speaking skills. In her first report form she explained why: "to redress the balance and use French in the classroom!" The initial successes she noted were that there was greater use of the target language in the classroom than before, and that the learners' conversational ability was beginning to develop. However, she noted that they still wanted to translate everything in the ELP into English, as a "comfort", she believed, "and to know that what they were doing was right". A month later, teacher L changed her mind about choosing speaking as the prime goal, and decided instead to focus on reading and writing skills. She explained this decision as follows:

> The target of writing has great structure. They can *see* what they produce and work on it for reading (pronunciation). (Second report form)

According to teacher L a month later, this new emphasis on getting learners to create texts in the target language fitted in with her new teaching approach – an approach that relied less on the textbook to generate learners' output and more on their own creativity. She observed:

> Prior to using the ELP I have been a slave to the textbook, working away, getting through the chapters. Now I see an overall picture of pupils learning with a plan we work on

Dans ma chambre la moquette est rose
Dans ma chambre l'armoire est blanche
Dans ma chambre la table de nuit est noire
Dans ma chambre les murs sont jaunes
Dans ma chambre le papier-peint est marron
Dans ma chambre les rideaux sont gris.

Figure 3.3
Poem by a 1st year learner of French

Vert, Blanc et Orange

Vert comme l'herbe
Si blanc que la neige
Orange me parle des fruits de bois

Vert représente la vie de soleil
Blanc me parle du vin
Orange est le couleur du coucher de soleil

Vert est le couleur de l'arbre
Blanc représente la paix
Orange est le couleur du potiron

Figure 3.4
Poem by two 1st year learners of French

rather than just going through the motions. I am more aware of the learners having needs and looking at teaching from the learners' point of view. (Third report form)

This shift in emphasis did not mean that she gave less priority to speaking skills; rather, she gave learners much more opportunity than before to construct their own sentences in creative fashion.

Figure 3.3 is an example of creative writing from this ELP project class, a poem that a learner wrote describing his bedroom; he typed it on his home computer for inclusion in his Dossier. This text is typical of the creative work that was produced by most of the first-year learners in other groups in that it exploits a simple syntactic pattern. Figure 3.4 shows a poem produced collaboratively by two first-year learners in another ELP project class, again based on a simple structure and theme (the colours of the Irish flag) introduced by their teacher. Clearly the syntax leaves plenty of room for improvement.

There was a general consensus that learners needed plenty of practice in basic target language forms and structures, as we see in these examples. In this sense we can say that the learners' output is "pushed" (Swain and Lapkin 1995): they created utterances (often through writing first and then through speaking) around a particular linguistic form, and this stimulated reflective processes (Swain 1998). Like the other project teachers, teacher L was keen to point out that her class always spent some time evaluating their output, and that in her view (shared by others) the preparation of work for the Dossier naturally involved learners in checking their texts for errors. In fact, teacher L noted in a report form that this process took a surprising amount of class time that she had not bargained for. (We return to the issue of errors in the discussion of teacher O's approach in 3.3.4 below.)

3.3.2 Teacher N's management of low-ability, poorly motivated learners

We described earlier how the teachers commented on the motivating impact of the ELP when they introduced it, and noted that learners seemed to enjoy the novelty of reflecting on their own learning. A small minority took much longer to adapt to this process. Teacher N in particular was concerned that some of his learners seemed to lack concentration and to be unable or unwilling to work in a situation which was not framed by strict teacher-led discourse. He described his solution to this problem thus:

Plenty of times my pupils said "I can't", but it was more serious if they didn't! I kept an eye on what they were writing and I corrected them as work progressed. To do this

kind of work you need two main strategies: a) a plan of action – with a knowledge of how you want to proceed with their work; and b) a policy for dealing with those that are unmotivated, lazy or plain disruptive. (Second report form)

Teacher N's main plan of action to stimulate motivation was to make a video of his learners speaking French:

> We practised ordering food from a menu copied from our book, using our classroom as a pretend café with pupils sitting in groups. We videoed a pupil taking orders as a waiter and answering questions from his customers. We visited a French café in town to practise ordering. This was also filmed. They were forced to phrase sentences or phrases themselves. Later, watching the video allowed them to consider and reflect on their use of the target language. (Second report form)

This event, which required the class to use the target language for genuine communicative purposes, seemed to be the turning point for teacher N and his class, all of whom ended the school year highly motivated. As he later wrote:

> It is very encouraging to see them think about *any* of their learning ... Evaluating their own and each other's work is fantastic and I want to do a lot more of this. (Final report form).

3.3.3 Teacher F: engaging her learners in setting targets

As mentioned earlier (see 3.2 above), teacher F noted her French group's initially negative reaction to target setting in the Language Biography. Her learners were in their final year at school, and this fact may have been the reason for their initial reluctance; possibly they resented spending time on what they regarded as peripheral activities. Significantly perhaps, teacher F's view was that they did not appreciate that they were doing the learning; rather, they depended on her to hand out information. She also observed in her first report form that weaker students assessed themselves "higher than what they can actually do" (here she is referring to their assessment of themselves as being at level B2).

This is how she recounts her experience of encouraging her six learners of French to engage in target setting:

> They already have a year plan which I drew up before the beginning of the year. It gives them a sense of where they are going and what they need to cover. They don't see the exact relation between the curriculum and the ELP; they are not familiar enough with it. They can see though that it will help them for revision. They find setting learning goals very hard. (First report form)

Two months later, after using the ELP as a basis for goal setting in

preparation for the exam, teacher F reported:

> The ELP has proved useful as a revision tool. It did make them think how much they could do in two weeks (during the spring holiday). Some students started with very unrealistic targets. The "mock" exams [taken a few months before the actual exam] were a disappointment for them. They looked at their mistakes and noted where they need to improve. I asked them to look at their future targets in this light. (Third report form)

It seems that the transparency of the ELP's sections on the organization of learning helped teacher F to make the group realize the function of self-evaluation. She also noted at this point that the learners "still see the ELP as a teacher's tool", adding that in future she would introduce the practice of self-evaluation at the beginning of the academic year.

Teacher F observed at subsequent group meetings that many of her learners – who were, after all, older than the other project learners – gradually came to understand the ELP self-evaluation process as an invaluable tool in assessing their progress through the prescribed curriculum. Figure 3.5 is an extract from a list of ELP aims that a learner of Spanish added to her Language Biography. Her success in managing her learning of Spanish is evident in the way she has designed these notes. The various headings in the left hand column are her own Spanish translations of the official syllabus (written in English), against which she can check her progress in relation to the five communicative skills defined in the ELP.

Syllabus and portfolio aims	BASIC COMMUNICATIVE PROFICIENCY				
1.1 Socialising	Comprensión oral	Lectura	Interacción oral	Expresión oral	Escritura
Preguntando los nombres	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Preguntando los edades	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Preguntando sobre hermanos y padres	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Preguntando sobre la rutina diaria	✓	✓	–	–	✓
Describiendo la región en que yo vivo	–	–	–	–	–
Felicitando alguién	–	✓	–	–	–

Figure 3.5
Extracts from a list of portfolio aims developed by a learner of Spanish

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

3.3.4 Teacher O's focus on writing through project work

Teacher O enjoyed the challenge of making innovative changes in her classes. She had already taken part in the Learner Autonomy Project with a low-proficiency group learning German over three years, and had piloted an earlier version of the ELP with this group. As described elsewhere (Ridley 2002), this teacher was known within the Learner Autonomy Project for taking problems in her stride. Indeed, her determination to keep her class on the road towards greater autonomy over the three years of that project – despite considerable setbacks – paid off: the class engaged with her approach, liked cooperating with her, and surprised everyone by doing well in their Junior Certificate exam.

Now teacher O was using the ELP with a first-year class learning French. The experience she had gained from the Learner Autonomy

Homer Simpson

Il est Paresseux. Il n'est pas sportif. Il est gros. Il n'est pas mince. Il est chauve. Il est grand. Il pese 200+ kilos. Il a trente-huit. Il est jaune. Il adore mange. Il n'est pas courageux. Il adore biere. Il n'est pas beau. Il est un pere - un fils (Bart) et deux fille (Lisa et Maggie). Il habite sept-cent et quarante deux Evergreen Tce., a Springfield, aux Etats Unis. Il adore le bistro de Moe. Il aime sa femme Marge. Il deteste Ned Flanders. Il adore Springfield Isotopes, une equipe de baseball. Il deteste les adversaires, Shelbyville. Il adore le foot american, les Cowboys de Dallas. Il a tue Maud Flanders (pas expres).

Figure 3.6
A text created by a 1st year learner of French

Project meant that she took for granted that she was "going to focus on 100% target language use" (teacher O only ever spoke the target language to her class from the start). She also decided that her learners, in the beginning stages especially, needed to develop writing skills to support the development of their oral proficiency. She described how she chose to focus on project work in order to help her learners develop an interest in the subject and to promote their intrinsic motivation. She gave them the option of writing a text on or creating tasks around a particular topic they chose, prompted by suggestions from the teacher. Working on well-known television characters proved particularly popular. Figure 3.6 (above) presents a 16-line text about Homer Simpson that one learner produced for his Dossier (at the time he had been learning French for about four months).

The quality of this uncorrected text needs to be interpreted against the background of what teacher O was trying to achieve at the time. First, her emphasis was on learners' output, and in this respect she was focussing on their creative construction of target language utterances, a process in which meaning came before form (Legenhausen 2002; see also 3.3.1 above). Second, teacher O (who, like her colleagues, regarded the textbook as one language learning support among many) centred her teaching on a particular topic from which project work grew. It should again be emphasized that the learners themselves were heavily involved in deciding on (i) the topic, chosen from the Junior Certificate curriculum, that the whole class would work on, (ii) the estimated length of time they would need to work on the topic, and (iii) the various learning activities carried out by individuals for the purpose of filling the Dossier section of their ELPs. At each stage of the process there was much brainstorming of ideas. Here is teacher O's end-of-year account of the types of activity that led to the creation of texts for individual Dossiers:

> They got the syllabus sheet in November [cf. Figure 3.1 above] and the very first thing they'd do was pick a topic from the list. Then they'd take out their dictionary and make themselves a list of words. And by the second time they did this they knew how long it took to get twenty-five words on this topic. By week three or four they were going home with this list and they were making up their fancy poster on the computer ... designing a word sheet or making up a quiz on the topic. And gradually over weeks new things came on board. (End-of-year group discussion)

This account indicates the autonomy of the group. However, it does not tell us much about the precise role of the teacher. Elsewhere teacher O gave more detailed accounts of how she worked with the class on the projects inspired by *The Simpsons* and another TV programme, *Father Ted*. The texts produced in both cases involved fairly simple descriptions of people.

Teacher O's accounts show that each project followed a pattern that was actually predetermined by her. To the learners, project-related activities appeared to be open-ended, in the sense that they often depended on individual learners' levels of enthusiasm for homework. A noticeable aspect of these projects was that they included frequent whole-class brainstorming of ideas, as described by teacher O:

> Learners wrote their own paragraph on each character, we brainstormed as a class, and I wrote the finished paragraph on the board, with suggestions from all the learners. They took down the finished paragraph; some read it aloud, others later typed it up. (Second report form)

Later comments suggest that teacher O's desire to develop her learners' writing skills drove her focus on topic/project work: she impressed upon them her view that "learning is doing, is action" and said

Il y avait une femme de Toulon,
Et elle s'appelle Yvonne.
Elle organize ses chaussures,
Elle fait un séjour,
Dans maison entre Lyon et Dijon!

Il y avait une souris, Jean,
Et il habite dans un salon.
Faire peur à une femme,
Il a faim,
Et il a mangé son garçon!

Il y avait une femme de Paris,
Et elle s'appelle Marie.
Elle a parlé anglais,
Elle a detesté le soleil,
Elle aime boisson - Merci!!!

Figure 3.7
Limericks created by first-year learners of French

of the ELP that it is like "an empty language textbook and the learner has to fill it" (third report form). A last example of this group's output is a selection of limericks that the class clearly had fun producing for their Dossier (Figure 3.7).

This emphasis on learning by writing in the target language brings us to the question of errors and error correction. Teacher O tended towards the view that documents stored in each learner's Dossier *belonged* to the learner, and that within the context of a huge amount of "creatively constructed" written output, the production of errors was less important than the process of writing – indeed, errors were a natural and inevitable part of it. This small point illustrates the diversity of project teachers' approaches.

3.4 Learners' perspectives on the ELP as a learning tool

We next turn to the learners themselves and seek to answer the question: Was there evidence that the cohort of project learners valued the ELP as a learning tool?

3.4.1 Samples from two beginner learners of French

Any detailed comparison between what different learners focussed on would be an arbitrary and invalid exercise, given the individual nature of each ELP, the particularities of each teaching-learning context, and the different degrees to which learners were encouraged to reflect on the various sections and headings in the Language Biography. The project teachers also noted that within each class there was diversity with respect to what individual learners focussed their attention on. Such diversity was not so much in the area of *My next target* (this was often guided by the teacher) but rather in relation to learning outcomes. There was also variation in the degree of introspection engaged in by individual learners, and the manner in which they attributed success or failure.

By way of illustration we can compare some early ELP entries of two learners in the same class, Tracy and Louise. Table 3.2 (below) gives some entries from their Language Biography's reflective pages on *Setting goals and thinking about learning*, written in the same lesson in their first term of learning French. It is possible to see the hand of the teacher in the *My next target* sections – both learners focus on particular verbs, for example. At the same time, each learner seems to be developing her own perspective on learning. For example, in the third row of the table they use different metalanguage to describe learning processes they have experienced. Tracy refers to "word triggers" and Louise describes one strategy of learning as "resemble the word with the meaning". The reasons they give for any

The (English) wording of a particular section:	Tracy's written comments	Louise's written comments
My next target	*Learn the verb faire et les expressions avec faire e.g je fais les courses*	To learn the faire verb et les expressions faire, e.g. je fais les courses.
How well did I achieve it?	*I think I did well in the faire section in the test. I found it easy because we got the word cuisine and we found word triggers to help us.*	I thought I achieved it well, but I am not that sure about the word before the noun (e.g. je fais mon lit). I don't think I'll ever master it, but I did fairly well in the test.
What have I learnt about myself or about learning?	*I think it easy when finding word triggers. I think it is important to learn the subject you are there doing.*	I have learnt that it's easier to learn if you resemble the word with the meaning.
My next target	*Our target is the days, months and seasons.*	To learn the days, the months, the seasons (les jours, les mois, le saison).
How well did I achieve it?	*I feel it was very easy because they sounded the same as the English. And I made a poster.*	I know the days very well, the seasons were a bit hard but I got them. The seasons are OK too.
What have I learnt about myself or about learning?	*I find it easy when you find word triggers.*	Things are easy if you like learning.
My next target	*My next target in French is my Christmas exam.*	Revise and study for the Christmas exam.
How well did I achieve it?	*I think easily enough.*	I achieved my goal very well as I studied hard for it a lot and because of this I got 90% in the test.
My next target	*That's to learn the verb voir*	Learn voir, the verb to see.
How well did I achieve it?	*I think I learnt it easily enough.*	I achieved my goal well. I find it quite hard because I'm not very good at learning verbs in general.

Table 3.2
Two learners' early Language Biography entries
(Setting goals and thinking about learning)

success or failure provide further evidence to support our inference that they are beginning to understand something about their own learning. For example, Louise attributes her success in the exam to the fact that she

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"studied hard for it a lot".

3.4.2 Insights from teacher O's class

Towards the end of the evaluation period, one of the research team visited teacher O's class to administer an open-ended questionnaire (see 2.4 above) and to chat informally about the ELP afterwards. The researcher made notes of what had been said immediately afterwards. The group (all boys) numbered 23 and the teacher was present. She had prepared the class for this visit by asking them to think in advance about their feelings towards the ELP (the learners knew they were

Category of reason for liking the ELP	Frequency of this category of reason	Example(s) and learner ID number
1. It helps me learn French	13	*It makes things simpler to understand.* (5) *I like working with the ELP because it helps us learn things (verbs) better than normal.* (1) *I like listening to new French words and producing pictures to help me understand the language better.* (11)
2. It's fun	11	*It is more fun making documents for the portfolio than looking in a book for ages.* (3) *We get to write and draw fun things for it.* (6) *It's a lot more fun than the (text)book.* (10)
3. Goal setting / monitoring and self-evaluation	10	*It allows me to write down how I'm doing in French.* (9) *You get to set your own goals at your own standard of working.* (12) *We can easily look back on what we have done and whether we are good or bad at it.* (17)
4. It's *not* the textbook	4	*It gives me time off the books which can get boring.* (20)
5. Gives a sense of creativity	3	*I was able to make documents that I thought looked good.* (13) *The (text)books are dull and it limits your imagination. The portfolio lets you imagine.*(19)
6. Allows learning at my own pace	2	*It gives you the chance to study at your own pace which helps you to learn faster.* (21)
7. It allows choice of activity	2	*As a class we can personally choose what we do next instead of going by the book.* (8)
8. It involves other languages	1	*It involves other languages along with the language I am learning.* (18)
9. It's "relaxing"	1	*It's a relaxing and much easier way of learning.* (16)

Table 3.3
Summary of reasons given by 22 learners for liking the ELP

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

participating in an evaluation project). Generally the class was enthusiastic about the ELP, with the exception of one boy who had recently arrived in Ireland with little knowledge of English. In the discussion of data that follows, this particular learner's responses are disregarded as anomalous; in other words, the analysis focuses on the responses of 22 learners.

The researcher talked through each question. Question 1 was this: *Do you like working with the ELP in your French class? If yes, tell us why. If no, tell us why not.* All 22 learners said that they liked using the ELP. Table 3.3 (above) categorizes the reasons they gave.

The fact that "it helps me to learn" is the most frequently cited reason allows us to answer the basic question posed above: clearly these project learners valued the ELP as a learning tool. It is worth noting that they tended to cite as a reason for liking the ELP *either* "fun" *or* the fact that it allowed them to set targets or evaluate their own progress.

The learners' responses to Question 2 also suggest that they felt most engaged with the ELP when they were *either* producing documents for the Dossier *or* monitoring their progress in the Language Biography: most learners wrote about one or the other, but not both. Question 2 was worded thus: *I want you to tell us why you think using the ELP might actually help you*

Category of reason given	Frequency of this category of reason	Example(s) and learner ID number
1. It helps me set targets and monitor my progress	9	*The ELP helps me to learn French because I can see what I'm good at and not good at, just by reading the targets.* (10) *The blue sheet* (i.e., the outline curriculum, see Figure 3.1) *allows you to keep a record of your progress.* (21)
2. It helps me record work from which to revise	8	*Because you record and keep all your work it is very easy to just look back over it to revise.* (2)
3. I learn through the activities	3	*It helps us because we draw pictures and write essays on French verbs and French items which help us to remember them.* (1)
4. It's fun / motivating	3	*I find it useful because when I was working on the drawings and pictures at the back I was learning French when having fun.* (14)
5. It's not the textbook	2	*It helps me to learn French as some people don't work 100% when working with the book all the time so that (the ELP) will be different and it will make you speak French more.* (14)

Table 3.4
Summary of 22 learners' responses to question 2:
In what ways do you think using the ELP helps you to learn French?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

to learn French. For example, using a diary helps you to plan and remember important events. Using a computer helps you to produce nice-looking documents or get information from the Internet. Using a mobile phone helps you to stay in touch with people. In what ways do you think using the ELP helps you to learn French? Responses seemed to fall into five separate categories (Table 3.4). These suggest that these learners enjoyed both preparing materials for the Dossier (cf. references to documents, activities) and working with the Language Biography (cf. references to target setting). Both sections act as springboards for revision (see the comment in the second category).

Question 3 homed in on the different sections: *Tell us which particular bit of the ELP you like best, and why. And which bit do you like least of all, and why?* As with the other questions, responses fell into distinct categories, as Table 3.5 shows. The fact that 26 elements were cited as "most favourite" whereas 15 were cited as "least favourite" is further evidence that the learners felt generally positive towards the ELP. The reasons they gave for preferring this or that element tended to relate to "learning", "fun" or "self-evaluation" (cf. Table 3.3) or to a combination of these. Some reasons give interesting insights into the learners' feelings of being in *control* of their learning; for example: "My favourite bit is setting my own targets and not moving too fast and giving myself the grade I deserve" (learner 17). Another learner comments on the motivating aspect of the Language Biography: "I like setting goals because it gives me a challenge".

Question 4 asked about the five communicative skills that the ELP

***Most* favourite element (frequency cited)**	***Least* favourite element (frequency cited)**
Creating documents (15)	Setting targets (8)
Setting targets (5)	The Passport (3)
The "blue sheet" curriculum outline (3)	Self-evaluation (1)
The Passport (1)	Listening (1)
Project work (1)	"Having to write a lot" (1)
Drawing (1)	Not enough targets (1)

Table 3.5
Summary of 22 learners' responses to Question 3:
Which bits of the ELP do you like best and least?

focuses on: *Which of these skills in particular have you been working on in your French class with Miss O?* In the Learner Autonomy Project we found that learners do not always share their teacher's priorities for learning (cf. Ridley 2001), so we wanted to see whether teacher O's heavy emphasis on writing skills had been taken up by her class. As it turned out, 20 learners mentioned writing and 18 mentioned listening (e.g., "we have to listen when Ms O talks French").

In the last question, we focussed on using the ELP to set targets. We asked: *Do you do this kind of thing – setting your own targets – in your other school subjects? And why do you think it's a good idea to try to set your own learning targets like this?* In response, all 22 learners wrote that they did not engage in target setting in other classes. Table 3.6 categorizes the reasons they gave in favour of setting their own targets.

Category of response	Frequency of this category of response	Example(s) and learner ID number
1. It seems to make the learner feel more in control of his learning	11	*It's good because we know what we can do and what we can't do and we can concentrate on both when we want to.* (16) *Things get done and I don't get sloppy.* (18) *The teacher does not know what we want so it's our job to tell her.* (20)
2. It makes learning more enjoyable	5	*If our teacher is telling us what to do and we don't like it we will just be dying for it to end and if this is happening we won't learn anything because we don't like it.* (4)
3. It helps make learning easier	5	*We can go at whatever pace we are able to go at, and we understand it much better.* (6)
4. It is a better way of learning than using the textbook	2	*We wouldn't just be writing and reading out of the book all the time.* (10)

Table 3.6
Summary of 22 learners' reasons for thinking that setting targets is "a good idea"

It is perhaps not surprising to see evidence that learners *felt* that they were in control of their learning when technically they were in control (in the sense that their teacher asked them to use the ELP to set learning targets and decide whether they achieved them). As a member of the Learner Autonomy Project, their teacher already had three years' experience of working with learner autonomy as her chief pedagogical goal. During the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ELP project she felt confident that she knew how to go about helping learners to achieve a sense of responsibility for their learning. We highlight this point because in this ELP project class, the ELP was a natural extension of what the teacher was already well used to encouraging: learner empowerment (learners took part in decision-making such as choosing activities); using the target language as the medium of teaching-learning as much as possible; and learner reflection (cf. Little, Ridley and Ushioda 2002).

3. 5 Teachers' final evaluation of the ELP

Six teachers filled in final evaluation forms. The first part of the form asked them to reflect on their perspective as teachers:

- What differences has working with the ELP made to you as a teacher in relation to
  - planning (courses, lessons), time management?
  - classroom management (organizing activities, groups, etc.)?
  - use of the textbook and other teaching-learning materials?
  - your personal view of the learning process?
  - your view of how your learners are getting on in developing their target language proficiency?

The second part asked them to reflect on the experience from the perspective of their learners:

- What differences has working with the ELP made to your learners in relation to
  - interest, motivation, attitudes to learning?
  - development of skills in self-management (planning, monitoring, evaluating learning)?
  - development of target language proficiency (overall proficiency levels, focus on particular skills)?

Clearly, teachers responded in the light of their experience of a specific project class, with its high or low achievers, more (or less) motivated learners, various proficiency levels and various target languages, not to mention a particular classroom or school culture. Thus direct comparisons are once more inappropriate. Instead, we can report on those experiences that the teachers themselves found important.

3.5.1 Teacher L's final evaluation

Teacher L, whose project class was in first year, emphasized the changes she had noticed in her own teaching approach since joining the project. The following extracts illustrate her emphasis on personal

change (cf. Kohonen 2000):

> I have a greater awareness of the need to change, to adapt and modify textbook material for various students' levels. It has taken me some time to develop a pattern, and to realize the full extent of the use of the ELP in different skills ... I was more prepared to try activities than before, with more dialogues and presentations from learners. The enthusiasm with which the learners participated is a great incentive to continue and develop this further ... Now I see an overall picture of pupils learning with a plan we work on, rather than just going through the motions ... Regarding my view of learning, being busy in the role of teacher, I did not take time (nor did it occur to me!) to look deeply at the learning process. When I use the ELP I am more aware of the learners as having *needs* and of looking at teaching from the learners' point of view.

From this we can conclude that in some respects there was a cyclical relationship between (i) teacher L's use of the ELP, (ii) her understanding of learning and of her learners, and (iii) her approach to teaching (which now included the ELP).

When it came to describing what she thought her project learners gained from the ELP, teacher L described how "the idea of planning, setting the objectives and seeing how they got on proved a real incentive". She noticed how they soon became "aware of the different requirements for skills", and she used this "awareness" to her advantage in her teaching. In short, the Language Biography seemed to arouse her learners' interest in and make them aware of their own learning, and this receptivity, she believed, contributed to their developing proficiency.

3.5.2 Teacher B's final evaluation

This teacher had two ELP project classes, one learning Irish (in an Irish-medium school) and the other group learning Italian. Her reports of her experience differ in the sense that her approach to working with the ELP took account of (i) the willingness-to-learn factor in each group and (ii) the other types of learning materials (including the textbook) that were available.

Teacher B observed an unexpected bonus in using the ELP with the learners of Irish:

> It can be difficult to motivate Irish classes in an all-Irish school as some feel the teaching of the language is superfluous ... they can resent a lot of instruction in the language. However use of the ELP highlighted what they needed and what they did not know.

Indeed, this observation led to a discovery about her whole perspective on teaching Irish in an Irish-medium school:

> I discovered that it is possible to make Irish-medium learners focus on grammar and

accuracy – it has always been a problem.

Teacher B also found that the ELP was a useful support in the teaching of idiom and accuracy right up until the examination:

> The use of the ELP has certainly achieved more in these vital aspects than any of my traditional methods.

The role of the ELP in teacher B's Italian class was less clearly defined. Nevertheless, she felt it contributed to her pupils' learning:

> They have not learned an awful lot this year (in terms of content), but they have a better grasp of things than they might have had without the ELP.

Teacher B also noted the potentially problematic role of the textbook, and concluded that the ELP was a useful complement that the learners came to appreciate:

> The book we use was not very suitable, so we used it as a support for learning wordlists and easy dialogues. Normally a class might resent a textbook being left aside as they would feel it has to be part of the exam syllabus, but in the case of the ELP they could see a valid reason for other activities as part of a larger project.

Later in her report teacher B stressed the importance of learners' perception of the ELP as a learning tool. If they do not understand its function they can easily feel that it is not "real work"; hence the need to explain its validity as a vehicle for learning.

3.5.3 Teacher O's final evaluation

We noted above (3.3.4) that this teacher had the longest experience of working with the ELP, having piloted it as part of our Learner Autonomy Project. Like teacher B, she was keen to stress the need for learners to understand its function. She explained how she used the syllabus outline (what her learners called the "blue sheet") to this end:

> Once the learners are aware of the syllabus content they are very willing to cooperate in terms of time management. As a team we are now able to agree when a topic is too long.

Teacher O used the syllabus outline to complement the Language Biography. Then, as learners set their own targets and decided on specific learning activities (under her guidance and often at her suggestion), documents were produced that might be included in the Dossier.

We noted earlier that teacher O prioritized writing skills, used the phrase "learning is doing", and saw the ELP as "an empty language textbook" to be filled by the learner. She made the following comment:

> Students *produced* a lot more using the ELP than they ever would if they had used only the textbook.

This focus on producing materials for the Dossier seemed to motivate her learners further (as we observed in our discussion of individual learners' comments in 3.4); and teacher O was convinced that their target language proficiency "was better than if they'd used the textbook alone".

It should be noted that this teacher's confidence in using the ELP started during the pilot phase, when she was teaching German to a class of low-ability learners. Then too she had found that (i) learners' knowledge of the syllabus led to target setting, (ii) target setting increased their motivation, and (iii) an emphasis on target language production (speaking and writing) tended to increase their motivation as well as contributing to the development of their target language proficiency (see Little, Ridley and Ushioda 2002 for a more detailed discussion of this class).

3.5.4 Teacher M's final evaluation

Teacher M had also taken part in the Learner Autonomy Project. Her comments in the final report indicate that she took some ideas for granted that other teachers were more cautious about. For example, she used the textbook and other teaching/learning materials "very little". In her final report teacher M chose to highlight something that had been raised during the evaluation period, namely that incorporating the ELP into the classroom requires planning time and effort on the part of the teacher.

She had this to say about the ELP's effect on the quality of learning:

> It has increased the motivation of some pupils. Those pupils see themselves as serious learners. One of the less motivated pupils produced *very* good work – better than in "pre-ELP" times. We have used the ELP as a revision focus and the pupils had to choose their topics.

This teacher had slight reservations about trying to estimate the extent to which she thought the ELP had contributed to her learners' target language proficiency. While it seemed to help them to become aware of their own learning rather quickly, she was keen to point out that this process may take time. She was similarly (and appropriately) cautious about making assumptions to do with her learners' target language proficiency:

> It's difficult to measure, as against something else. I thought my learners needed time to get used to the ELP and to adapt to a new way of doing things. So I don't know if it's possible to measure the extent to which their proficiency increased during this period. (End-of-year group discussion)

3.5.5 Teacher N's final evaluation

We noted earlier (see 3.3.2 above) that this teacher had quickly observed that his class became much more motivated about learning French when they started using the ELP. His ELP project class was a second-year class, and it is worth pointing out that one of the findings of the Learner Autonomy Project was that levels of motivation seemed to be lower among second-year than among first-year learners (see Little, Ridley and Ushioda 2002).

In his final report teacher N explained that his teaching approach tended to be driven by "teaching ideas" – ideas (about content, for example) that he would involve the class in. The ELP seemed to support this approach, as this extract shows:

> We had set a goal, to revise the regular verbs and the irregular verbs in the present tense. I then told the pupils to research this for themselves in the books ... Since I introduced the ELP class management has been very good. Pupils sometimes suggest what they want to do and who they want to work with. I always agree and do not break up a group unless they are not producing any work.

Thus goal setting and producing work (especially for the ELP competition, which was a great incentive for this class especially) promoted motivation; and motivation entailed not only "wanting" to achieve something but also putting in effort in order to achieve it. As teacher N put it:

> The pupils love the concept of the ELP and feel empowered by it: it's waiting to be filled up!

In relation to goal setting, a significant step forward proudly noted by this teacher in his final evaluation was his learners' readiness to use the target language in this process. As we signalled in our earlier description of the Irish ELP (see 1.2.2 above), its multilingual format is designed to provide learners with linguistic support in formulating their own goals and reflections in the target language. For teacher N, the positive effect on his learners was almost unbelievable:

> I was amazed today to see them setting a new goal ... using some of the phrases and vocabulary of the previous goal that I had given them, and I thought it was a fantastic moment. Without me even telling them. Brilliant. I think that's definite proof of it working, you know. (End-of-year group discussion)

The introduction of group work also contributed to learner motivation, in teacher N's view. In addition, the ELP allowed him "to see how different all my pupils are". With regard to their developing target language skills, he seemed confident that the emphasis on learners "researching" or looking up information for themselves contributed to

their developing proficiency. He noted that the ELP helps to make the process "more transparent" to the teacher as well as the learner.

3.5.6 Teacher J's final evaluation

This was an interesting classroom experiment because teacher J was teaching Japanese without a textbook, and the ELP became the basis for her curriculum. Her small class of eight learners were in their transition year (15–16 years), and therefore older than most of the other project groups. Teacher J described how she got them started with the ELP and involved them in the planning process:

> There is no syllabus or curriculum. It was easier for me to plan the course with the ELP ... I asked the students to choose the items they wanted to be able to do in Japanese from checklists I had ... I tried to organize the course around considering what they wanted.

This early involvement of the learners naturally led the teacher to plan on the basis of their needs:

> By discussing the checklists with the students I could consider their needs and plan activities accordingly. I think this worked well.

Reflecting on how she thought the learners benefited from the ELP, teacher J commented:

> The use of the ELP motivated the students to learn writing. By looking at the ELP with a translation in Japanese, they started to think how the Japanese writing system worked, and why they needed to learn three different scripts.

This comment reinforces what other teachers had experienced: the ELP triggered an awareness among learners of not only what they were learning but also why they were learning, and with what degree of success. This awareness, as Dam (1995) has shown, is central to the development of learner autonomy.

4 Conclusion

4.1 Overall evaluation

Our concern was to discover whether and how the project participants benefited from working with the ELP. The various classroom experiments described in section 3 clearly indicate that the project teachers and their learners accepted the ELP, liked using it, and successfully integrated it into their teaching and learning agendas.

Each teacher took his or her own approach to implementing the ELP

as an instrument for teaching. Moreover, their personal approaches were a dynamic mixture of (i) explicit, intentional and proactive decisions (relating to their objective assessment of the particular needs of their project class); and (ii) less conscious responses that were triggered by their intuitions of what seemed to work for their learners and what did not. In other words, what they did with the ELP in class was either a result of deliberate advance planning (how to tackle the curriculum, for example) or a reactive response to what they noticed as their learners worked on activities arising from or leading towards the ELP.

It emerged from our discussion of individual teachers' approaches that those who tended to take deliberate decisions about how to integrate the ELP into their lessons were also quite confident about the notion of learner autonomy. And when they saw their learners reflecting on their own learning – and by and large enjoying the process – they quickly realized that here was a ready-made tool for starting their learners on the road towards assuming responsibility for their learning. This made these teachers even more confident about learner autonomy. In this respect, the Language Biography section of the ELP provided a real hook on which teachers could hang their aspirations for the development of learning-to-learn skills among their learners. The same teachers also welcomed the Dossier because it so obviously motivated learners to produce plenty of output in the target language.

As for those teachers for whom the concept of learner autonomy and its pedagogical implications were initially rather fuzzy, we noted that a certain relief spread among them when they realized that making learners reflect on their own learning did not in any way threaten the teaching-learning relationship. Rather, it improved it, particularly in the area of learners' intrinsic motivation. In other words, they found that "handing over" some responsibility to learners proved not only acceptable but also easy, especially when they began to decide *with* the learners which themes or topics of the curriculum they would work on next.

This is not to say that the process of getting learners more actively involved in their own learning presented no problems. Teachers experienced difficulties that were either practical (for example, how often to work with the ELP, where to keep the folders, or how precisely to explain the ELP's function to the class) or psychological (for example, worries about how much of the target language was being learnt, especially whenever the crutch of the textbook was disregarded). Both sets of problems tended to be resolved, however, once teachers discovered that in order for the ELP to be maximally beneficial they had to negotiate its use with their learners. In the classroom context the term negotiation does

not mean bargaining or making compromises but joint decision-making. For example, we noted in section 3 that the question of ownership cropped up at an early stage of the project, in that teachers wondered who was ultimately responsible for the ELPs, themselves or their learners. The answer was, of course, that both parties were jointly responsible. The learners felt (and enjoyed feeling) that they owned this part of their learning; while their teachers knew that all the time it was up to them to oversee, manage and help learners with all activities to do with the ELP, whether these involved reflecting on the nature of the target language or on themselves as language learners, or producing material for inclusion in the Dossier.

We know from what teachers said that by the end of the evaluation period the ELP had become a natural part of their classroom practice. What is more, the process of overseeing the ways in which each member of the class engaged with the ELP helped the teachers to understand more about the benefits of the explicit and reflective aspects of language learning and teaching. Their own professional knowledge was thus enhanced. This came about partly because they had allowed *time* in the week for learners to work at their own pace on something they had chosen, which allowed them the opportunity to observe individuals close up and provide encouragement where necessary.

As far as the learners were concerned, we know that on the whole they enjoyed working with the ELP. At all the teachers' meetings there was reference to the motivating effect of the ELP, and those learners whom we interviewed were generally very enthusiastic. We have noted several times that learners tended to relate positively to the ELP either because they enjoyed preparing documents for the Dossier or because they felt the Language Biography helped their learning. It should be remembered, of course, that most learners in the evaluation project were in their first year at secondary school and on the whole eager to learn; and that some older learners were initially more sceptical about the relevance of the ELP. The older learners who were used to the "transmission" style of teaching did not immediately understand the point of reflection or self-evaluation – probably because for a long time they had been used to setting performance goals (as measured by exams) rather than goals to do with mastery of the target language (cf. Dweck 1999). Significantly for the teachers, the older project learners needed as much help in filling out the Language Biography sections that concerned target setting as the younger ones. This finding was interpreted as an indicator of their dependence on the teacher. It leads to the conclusion that all types of learners need practice in working with the ELP before they fully understand its learning potential.

To sum up at this point, we can say that both teachers and learners understood the ELP's function and benefited from its use. However, this came about only when there was mutual agreement (negotiation) about the priorities regarding what was to be tackled, when and in what manner.

4.2 Future directions

As we noted at the end of section 1, the effectiveness of the ELP as a pedagogical tool can only be gauged with reference to the particular teaching-learning context in which it is implemented, and confirmed by reference to the experience of those working with it. We therefore believe very strongly in the value of qualitative empirical research of the kind we have reported on here. Clearly, there is a need for similar kinds of evaluative studies to be conducted in different pedagogical environments, and in relation to different target languages, age groups and proficiency levels.

One way of broadening the evaluative focus would be to explore the impact of the ELP across the whole language curriculum, since plurilingualism and different levels of competence in different languages are integral to the concept of the ELP. For example, a research project might be set up that involved a number of teachers from the same school teaching different languages (e.g., Irish, French and German) to a particular learner group. Even within the limited scope of our own evaluation project, it was evident that working with the ELP encouraged many learners to compare the languages they knew and to reflect on their abilities in different languages. It was also evident that the positive classroom experiences reported by several teachers in the project were sufficient to rouse considerable interest in the ELP among other teachers in their schools, some of whom travelled to Dublin in May 2002 to attend the ELP award ceremony and find out more about the ELP. In short, there is strong potential for involving different language teachers from the same school in an integrated ELP project.

This brings us to the last point we want to make, which concerns the role of teacher networking. From the feedback participating teachers gave us, it was very clear that what they appreciated most about the evaluation project (perhaps more than any input we as researchers could give them) was the opportunity of networking with other teachers who were using the ELP, sharing classroom experience, ideas and materials, and engaging in regular discussion and information exchange. Thus while we would emphasize the need for further research and publication so that evaluative findings can be appropriately disseminated, we should also like to stress the value of informal information exchange and support networks among

teachers who use the ELP, since it is very evident that much is to be gained from sharing good practice. After all, the success of the ELP ultimately lies in the hands of teachers and their learners.

This last consideration prompts us to conclude by expressing our gratitude to all the teachers and learners who participated in our evaluation project and provided us with valuable data and the many interesting insights we have been able to report in this paper. We should also like to extend our thanks to those interested parties who attended our project meetings and contributed to our discussions.

References

Authentik 2001: *European Language Portfolio / Punann na dTeangacha Eorpacha.* Version for use in Irish post-primary schools. Dublin: Authentik.

Council of Europe 2001: *A Common European Framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dam, L., 1995: *Learner autonomy 3: from theory to classroom practice.* Dublin: Authentik.

Dweck, C. S., 1999: *Self-theories: their role in motivation, personality, and development.* Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

Karlsson, L., F. Kjisik and J. Nordlund (eds), 2001: *All together now. Papers from the 7th Nordic conference and workshop on autonomous language learning.* Helsinki: University of Helsinki Language Centre.

Kohonen, V., 2000: Portfolio-oriented language education and the teacher's professional development. *Babylonia* 4, pp.11–14.

Lazenby Simpson, B., 2002: Learning the language of the host community using the European Language Portfolio. In D. Little (ed.), *European perspectives on three key issues in language teaching North and South,* Papers from a European Year of Languages Conference supported by the Departments of Education North and South, Belfast 30 November and 1 December 2001, pp.11–13.

Legenhausen, L., 2002: Second language acquisition in an autonomous learning environment. In D. Little, J. Ridley and E. Ushioda (eds), *Learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom: teacher, learner, curriculum and assessment.* Dublin: Authentik.

Little, D., 1991: *Learner autonomy 1: definitions, issues and problems.* Dublin: Authentik.

Little, D., 1999: Developing learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom: a social-interactive view of learning and three fundamental pedagogical principles. *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* 38, pp.77–88.

Little, D., 2001: We're all in it together: exploring the interdependence of teacher and learner autonomy. In L. Karlsson et al. (eds), pp.45–56.

Little, D., 2002: The European Language Portfolio: structure, origins, imple-

mentation and challenges. *Language Teaching* 35 (3), pp.182–9.

Little, D., and R. Perclová, 2001: *European Language Portfolio: a guide for teachers and teacher trainers*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe

Little, D., J. Ridley and E. Ushioda, 2002: *Towards greater learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom*. Report on an Irish research-and-development project 1998–2001. Dublin: Authentik.

Ridley, J., 2001: Teachers' and learners' understanding of what language learning entails. In L. Karlsson et al. (eds), pp.188–194.

Ridley, J., 2002: Learners' ability to reflect on language and on their learning. In D. Little, J. Ridley and E. Ushioda (eds), *Learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom: teacher, learner, curriculum and assessment*. Dublin: Authentik.

Schärer, R., 2001: *A European Language Portfolio – Final report on the pilot project (1998–2000)*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Swain, M., 1998: Focus on form through conscious reflection. In C. Doughty and J. Williams (eds), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition*, pp.64–81. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swain, M., and S. Lapkin, 1995: Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: a step towards language learning. *Applied Linguistics* 16 (3), pp.370–391.

Thomsen, H., and G. Gabrielsen, 1991: *New classroom practices in foreign language teaching: co-operative teaching-learning*. Copenhagen: Danmarks Lærerhøjskole. (Video and mimeo.)

Ushioda, E., 2001: Learner autonomy in Irish L2 classrooms: new initiatives. In L. Karlsson et al., pp.219–225.

APPENDIX 1

Teachers and classes who participated in the empirical evaluation of the ELP

Teacher	School	Language	Year	No. of learners
Margaret Brady	St Paul's College, Raheny, Dublin	German	4th	14
		German	2nd	24
Alma D'Arcy	Ardscoil Rís, Griffith Avenue, Dublin	French	3rd	30
Daniel Deery	St Mary's College, Dundalk	French	5th	12
Bernadette Fitzgerald	Coláiste Pobail Osraí, Kilkenny	Irish	2nd	14
	Kilkenny City Vocational School	Italian	2nd	20
Richard Flood	Sancta Maria College, Ballyroan, Dublin	French	5th	20
Dolorès Kennedy	Dundrum College, Dublin	French	2nd	16
Liz Kennedy	St Aloysius College, Athlone	French	1st	16
Emer Lally	St Mary's College, Dundalk	French	2nd	23
Sinéad Ní Thuathaigh	Gairmscoil Mhuire, Thurles	French	1st	20
Neil O'Callaghan	St Thomas' Community College, Bray	French	2nd	18
Saeko Ogiso	Mount Anville Secondary School, Dublin	Japanese	transition	8
Sandra O'Keeffe	St Mary's College, Dundalk	German	5th	19
		German	2nd	22
Éilis O'Toole	Salesian College, Celbridge	French	1st	28
Sandrine Pac	John Scottus School, Dublin	Spanish	5th	1
		French	6th	6
Mary Shiel	Loreto Secondary, Bray	Irish	5th	22
	Total no. of teachers: 15 Total no. of ELP project classes: 19	Total no. of learners:		333

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX 2

List of prizewinners in the ELP competition (10 May 2002)

Class prizewinners (selected by each class)

Teacher	School	Language	Best ELP	Most original idea	General achievement
Margaret Brady	St Paul's College, Raheny, Dublin	German 2nd year	*Christopher Allen Michael Bosonnet*	*Ross Barry*	*Stephen O'Brien*
Bernadette Fitzgerald	Coláiste Pobail Osraí, Kilkenny	Irish 2nd year	*Cáit Nig Raighne*	*Seán Ó Ceallaigh*	*Laoise Nic Uait*
	Kilkenny City Vocational School	Italian 2nd year	*Mark Hayes*	*James Brennan Declan Kennedy*	*Mark Pierce*
Liz Kennedy	St Aloysius College, Athlone	French 1st year	*Mark Mulligan*	*Cathal Dunning*	*Paul McGovern*
Sinéad Ní Thuathaigh	Gairm Scoil Mhuire, Thurles	French 1st year	*Christy Gleeson*	*Colm Young*	*Philip Ryan*
Neil O'Callaghan	St Thomas' Community College, Bray	French 2nd year	*Leanne O'Brien*	*Sarah Fegan*	*Jason Doyle*
Éilis O'Toole	Salesian College, Celbridge	French 1st year	*Niall Conway*	*Gearóid McGauran*	*Ian Kavanagh*
Sandrine Pac	John Scottus School, Dublin	Spanish 5th year	*Caroline Pierce*		
		French 6th year		*Laura McGeough*	*Oonagh Murphy*

Overall prizewinners (selected by research team)

Teacher	School	Language	Best ELP	Most original idea	General achievement
Sandrine Pac	John Scottus School, Dublin	Spanish 5th year	*Caroline Pierce*		
Éilis O'Toole	Salesian College, Celbridge	French 1st year	*Niall Conway*		
Bernadette Fitzgerald	Coláiste Pobail Osraí, Kilkenny	Irish 2nd year		*Seán Ó Ceallaigh*	
Sinéad Ní Thuathaigh	Gairm Scoil Mhuire, Thurles	French 1st year			*Philip Ryan*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

© 2002
The authors

29. Susan Abbey, *A case for on-going evaluation in English language teaching projects* (43pp.)

Spring 1992

30. Frank Donoghue, *Teachers' guides: a review of their function* (51pp.)
31. Barbara Byrne, *Relevance Theory and the language of advertising* (76pp.)

Summer 1992

32. Jonathan West, *The development of a functional-notional syllabus for university German courses* (50pp.)
33. James Mannes Bourke, *The case for problem solving in second language learning* (23pp.)

Autumn 1992

34. Tom Hopkins, *Intertextuality: a discussion, with particular reference to* The Waste Land (28pp.)
35. David Singleton & Emer Singleton, *University-level learners of Spanish in Ireland: a profile based on data from the TCD Modern Languages Research Project* (12pp.)

Spring 1993

36. Frank Maguire, *Sign languages: an introduction to their social context and their structure* (39pp.)
37. Ema Ushioda, *Acculturation theory and linguistic fossilization: a comparative case study* (54pp.)

Summer 1994

38. Carl James, Phil Scholfield & George Ypsiladis, *Cross-cultural correspondence: letters of application* (28pp.)
39. Dieter Wolff, *New approaches to language teaching: an overview* (18pp.)

Spring 1995

40. James A. Coleman, *Progress, proficiency and motivation among British university language learners* (38pp.)

Summer 1995

41. Terence Odlin, *Causation in language contact: a devilish problem* (40pp.)
42. Dee McGarry, *An integrated ESL and cultural studies syllabus* (43pp.)

Spring 1996

43. Terence Odlin, *"Sorrow penny yee payed for my drink": taboo, euphemism and a phantom substrate* (24pp.)
44. Michael Sharwood Smith, *The Garden of Eden and beyond: on second language processing* (20pp.)
45. Diana Masny, *Examining assumptions in second language research* (24pp.)

Summer 1996

46. David Little & Helmut Brammerts (eds), *A guide to language learning in tandem via the Internet* (24pp.)

Spring 1997

47. Barbara Lazenby Simpson, *Social distance as a factor in the achievement of pragmatic competence* (60pp.)
48. Danièle Tort-Moloney, *Teacher autonomy: a Vygotskian theoretical framework* (54pp.)
49. Terence Odlin, *Hiberno-English: pidgin, creole, or neither?* (39pp.)

Autumn 1997

50. Robert J. Fouser, *Pragmatic transfer in highly advanced learners: some preliminary findings* (44pp.)
51. Hans W. Dechert, *What's in a life?* (19pp.)

Spring 1998

52. Ghiath El-Marzouk, *Avoidance defined: the psychology of linguistic determinism and the ontology of cognitive predeterminism* (74pp.)
53. David Singleton, *Lexical processing and the "language module"* (38pp.)

Spring 1999

54. Marie Christine Appel, *Tandem language learning by e-mail: some basic principles and a case study* (64pp.)
55. David Little, Ema Ushioda, Marie Christine Appel, John Moran, Breffni O'Rourke, Klaus Schwienhorst, *Evaluating tandem language learning by e-mail: report on a bilateral project* (54pp.)

Summer 2000

56. Laila Aase, Anne-Brit Fenner, David Little, Turid Trebbi, *Writing as cultural competence: a study of the relationship between mother tongue and foreign language learning within a framework of learner autonomy* (52pp.)
57. David Singleton, Síle Harrington, Alison Henry, *At the sharp end of language revival: English-speaking parents raising Irish-speaking children* (12pp.)
58. Karen Ruddock, *An argument for the use of authentic texts with beginners of Japanese as a foreign language* (12pp.)

Autumn 2000

59. Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović, *Language learning strategies and affect* (28pp.)

Autumn 2002

60. Miyuki Usuki, *Learner autonomy: learning from the student's voice* (28pp.)
61. Ema Ushioda and Jennifer Ridley, *Working with the European Language Portfolio in Irish post-primary schools: report on an evaluation project* (55pp.)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").